

THE BIBLE IN PICTURE AND STORY



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THE
BIBLE IN PICTURE AND STORY.

BY MRS. L. S. HOUGHTON.



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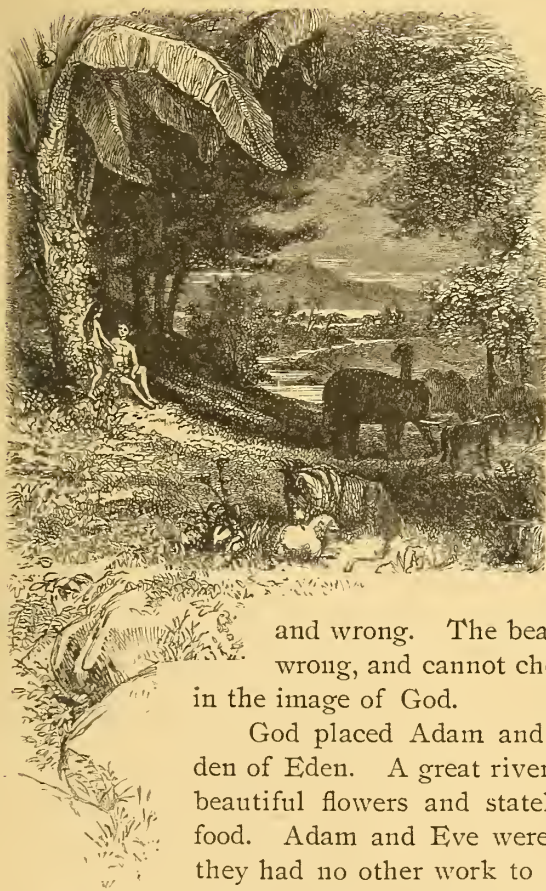
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GENESIS.



WHEN God first made this world it was very beautiful, and God saw that it was good. There were then no people living in the world, but only beasts and birds and fishes. Then God made a man and a woman, and called their names Adam and Eve.

The Bible tells us that Adam and Eve were made in the image of God. This does not mean that they looked like God, for God is a Spirit, and has not a body as men and women have. It means that they were like God in having a soul that will never die, and in having a will, and the power to choose between one action and another, and between right

and wrong. The beasts are not so ; they do not know right from wrong, and cannot choose between good and evil, and they are not in the image of God.

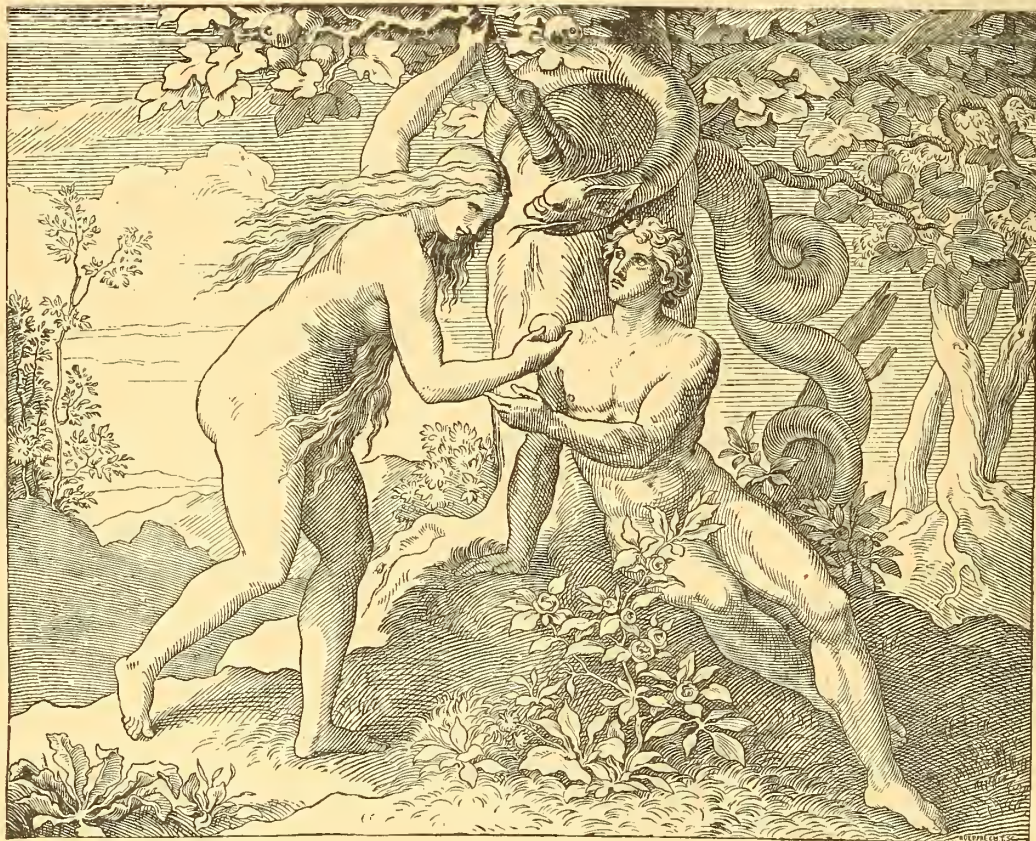
God placed Adam and Eve in a beautiful garden called the Garden of Eden. A great river ran through this garden, and in it grew all beautiful flowers and stately trees and all things that were good for food. Adam and Eve were to take care of this beautiful garden, but they had no other work to do, and this work was not hard, for in that lovely climate everything grew without much care. God brought all the beasts to Adam and he gave them their names, and God made him the master over all the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air.

Adam and Eve were very happy in Eden. They loved one another very much, and they loved God too, and were not afraid of him, for they had no sin in their hearts. They wished only to please God, and that made them very happy. They loved to think about God and to talk with him. When we talk with God we call it praying.

God had told Adam and Eve that they might eat of every tree in the garden except one. If they ate of that one tree, God said, they should die. This one was called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The meaning of this name is this: we cannot tell whether a person is good or not until he has been tried. And so it would not be certain that Adam and Eve were good, and would remain good, until they had a chance to do wrong. If, then, they chose to do right, it would be because they were really good. If they chose to do wrong they must die, for sin is a deadly thing.

For a time Adam and Eve did not touch the fruit of the forbidden tree. They had enough other fruit to eat, and besides they wanted to do right and to please God. But one day the serpent spoke to Eve, and said, "Has God indeed said that you may not eat of every tree in the garden?" Eve answered, "We may eat of every tree except one; if we eat of that one we shall die." The serpent told her that this was not true; that she would not die if she ate of it, but that she would become like God, because she would know good from evil.

If Eve had stopped to think she might have seen that it is a sad thing to know evil,





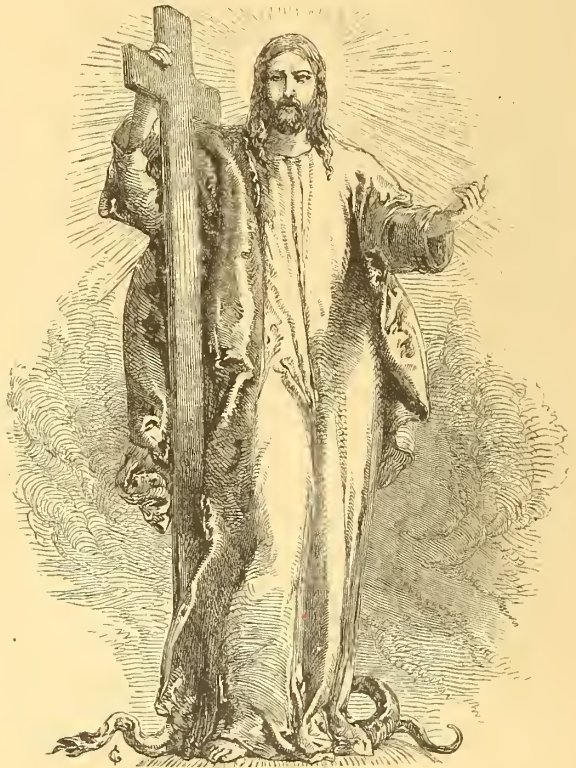
and that to know good she had only to obey God. But Eve wanted to be wise, and when she looked at the fruit and saw how nice it looked, and when she thought that it would make her wise, she wanted it very much. She forgot what God had said, and thought only of what the serpent had said, and she took some and ate, and gave it to her husband, and he also ate.

And then they did become wise, but it was a sad wisdom, for all it taught them was that they had sinned. Then they began to be afraid of God, whom, till that time, they had loved, and they hid themselves in a thicket of shrubs. But God knew where they were, and he told them that they must go out of the garden. He said that from this time they must work hard, and have many sorrows and pains and sicknesses, and at last they must die. God punished the serpent too. He told him that from that time he must crawl upon the ground, and that men would always hate serpents and would kill them whenever they saw them.

Then God sent an angel with a flaming sword to drive Adam and Eve out of Eden. How sad and sorry they were! How dreadful it was to be driven away from their lovely home, where they had been so happy, and where they had loved the presence of God, out into the wild world where sorrow and trouble were!

But though they had sinned, God loved them still. Even then he gave them a promise to be their comfort. He told them that one of their descendants should bruise the serpent's head. By that he meant, destroy the power of Satan. We know who it is who has done this. It is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became also the Son of man, and died upon the cross to destroy the power of sin and to redeem us from all evil. Every one who lives has a sinful heart, for all are the children of Adam and Eve, who chose to do wrong and disobey God. But Jesus Christ gives a new heart to every one who believes on him, and he frees them from the power of sin and gives them help to do right.

Adam and Eve were comforted when God gave them the promise that a descendant of theirs should thus overcome their evil with good, and bring a blessing into the world in place of the curse which their sin had brought. But though they had this comfort, they had much sorrow. In the first place Adam had to work very hard,



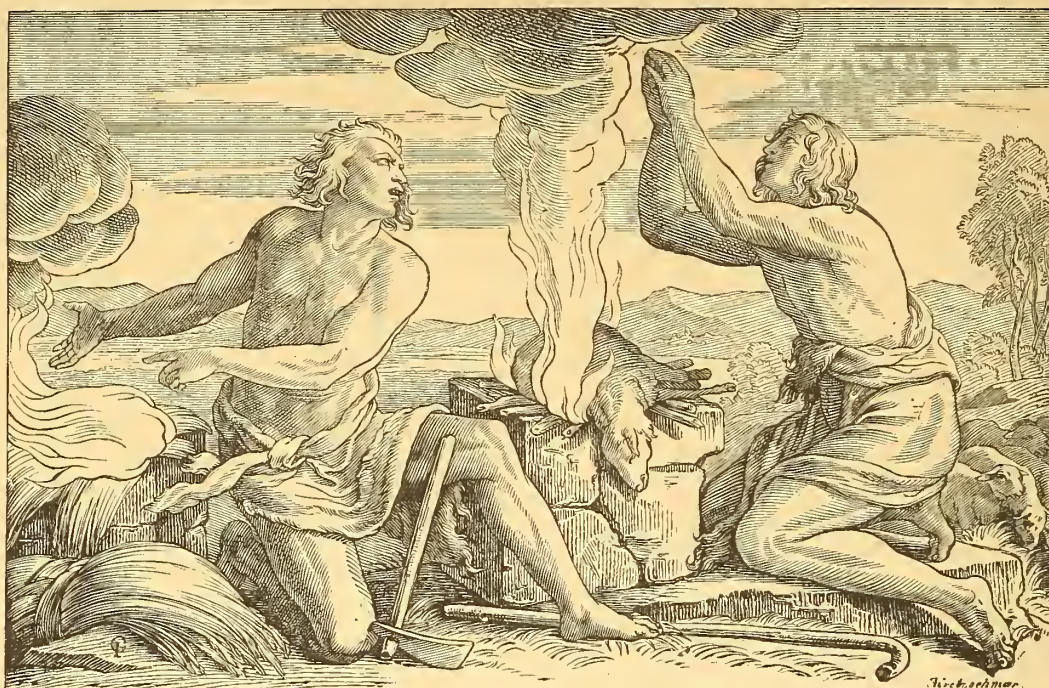
for food did not grow of itself, as it had done in Eden. And thorns and briers grew fast, and would have choked the good plants so that they would have died, if Adam had not been very careful to keep them cut down.

But they had something worse than work to trouble them. For now that they had that sad knowledge of evil which the serpent had promised them, they were often unkind to one another, and cross and fretful. And they must have been all the more unhappy for thinking of the home they had lost by their sin. And so life was a very sad thing for both of them.

After a time, however, a great joy came to them, for God sent them a little son. They called his name Cain, which means Possession. How proud and happy Adam and Eve were with their little boy baby! And after a few years another little boy was born to them. They called his name Abel.



Now Adam and Eve had something to work for, and we may believe that for a few years their home was a happy one. It was a busy place, for Adam must work the harder, with so many mouths to fill, and Eve had no one to help her in the care of the children or in the duties of the home. While the boys were little they played together, and as they grew older they learned to help their parents. Adam and Eve had many other children, although the Bible tells us the name of only one of them—Seth.



When Cain and Abel grew to be young men they each chose the work that they liked best. Cain became a tiller of the ground, that is, a farmer, and Abel became a shepherd. Both callings are very useful, and in both a man may be good and may please God. But Cain was not good. He did not care much about pleasing God.

God had taught Adam how He wished to be worshipped, by him and by all his descendants. He ordained that His worship should be of such a kind as should keep alive in men's minds the truth that they have sinned, and brought death into the world, and that a Saviour was going to be given, some day, who would die to redeem them. He taught Adam to build an altar, and on it to burn a lamb or a kid after he had killed it, as a sign of Christ, the Lamb of God who was to die for the sins of men. This was called offering a sacrifice. It was a very solemn service, and Adam and his children knew very well what it meant.

One day, when Cain and Abel were grown up, both of them offered sacrifices to God. Cain brought some of the fruits of the ground, for he was a farmer, and Abel brought a lamb from his flock, for he was a shepherd. God was pleased with Abel and his offering, for it showed that he knew that he had sinned, and that he looked to the Saviour for forgiveness; but He was not pleased with Cain and his offering, for Cain's was only a thank-offering, and showed no sorrow for sin. Cain was very angry because God did not show him the same tokens of favor which he showed to Abel. The more he thought about the matter the more angry he was, and at last, one day, as he and his brother were talking to one another in the field, Cain killed Abel!



How must Cain have felt when he saw his brother lying on the ground before him, dead! He had seen dead animals before, but never a dead man. Perhaps he had never believed before that men and women could die; and now here was his brother dead by his own act! Cain soon heard the voice of God saying to him, "Where is Abel, thy brother?" If Cain had killed his brother by mistake, in the heat of anger, he would not have answered as he did. "I know not," is his answer. "Am I my brother's keeper?" Then God told Cain that because he had killed his brother, the ground would not be fruitful for him when he tilled it, as

it had been before; and He told him that he must go away from his father's house and be a wanderer on the earth. Cain did not want to go away. Though he did not love God, nor care to obey him, he did want God to take care of him, and he feared to go away from home, lest he should also go away from the protection of God. But he was obliged to obey God, and so he went away to a land far off to the east, and his father and mother never saw him again.

But what grief was now that of Adam and Eve! One son dead, and another son a murderer and a wanderer, nevermore to come home to them! Now at last they felt what it was to sin against God and bring death into the world. Oh, how they must have mourned: for their dead son, and for the living son who was worse than dead, and more than all for that sin of theirs by which they had brought this woe upon themselves and upon all their children. Though God had forgiven them their sin, yet the effects of it they must bear, and now they began to see how awful the effects of sin are.

Adam and Eve had another son after Abel was killed, whom they named Seth. He lived to grow up and have many sons and daughters. In those days people lived much longer than they do now. Adam lived to be nine hundred and thirty years old, and Seth nine hundred and twelve. One of Seth's descendants lived to be nine hundred and sixty-nine years old. His name was Methuselah, and he was the oldest man of whom we have any record.

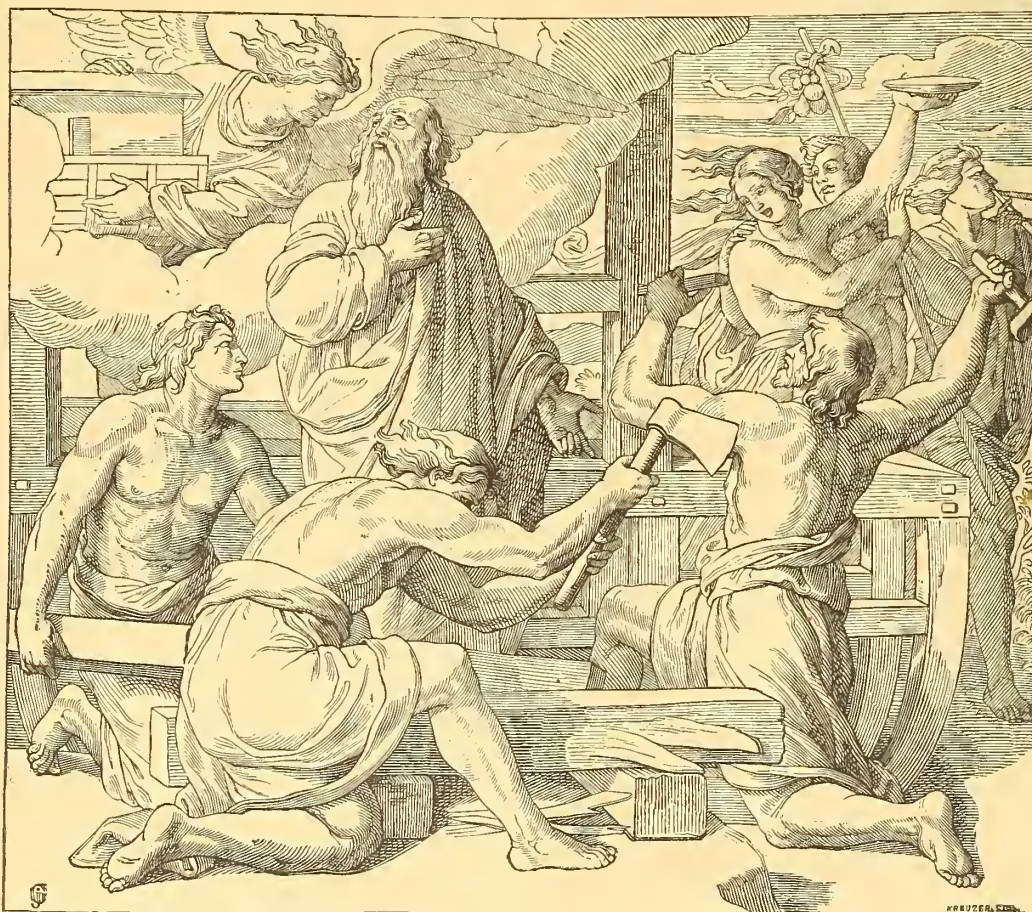
But though they lived to be old, they had to die at last. To all these people who lived so many years death came sooner or later, as it does to every one now. There was only one man who did not die. His name was Enoch, and he was the father of Methuselah, the oldest man. This is what the Bible says of him: "And Enoch walked with God, and he was not: for God took him."

It must have been a glorious thing to go to heaven without dying, as Enoch did, for that is what we understand by "he was not, for God took him." But is it not also glorious to "walk with God" when in this life? Enoch did so, and he must have been most happy, as well as most good, and a blessing to every one that knew him.

Many years passed away, and the parts of the world where Adam and his descendants lived became very full of people. And many of the people were very wicked. In fact they grew worse and worse, and more and more sinful, until God saw that it was best to destroy them all at once.

Now there was still one good man in the world. His name was Noah, and he was a true servant of God. He loved to please God and prayed often to him, and brought up his three sons to serve God. The names of these three sons were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. This one family was the only pious family in the world.

God spoke to Noah and bade him build a large boat, called an ark, because there was going to be a dreadful flood, which would drown everybody in the world and all the animals, except those who should be saved in the ark. God had told Noah just how



large it was to be, and just what shape, and how to build and finish it. While Noah was building the ark he continually preached to the people around, warning them of what was going to happen and urging them to turn away from their sins and serve God. But no one paid any attention to him. And as Noah was a long time building the ark, they became quite used to his preachings, and went on their own wicked way just as much as if they had never been warned.

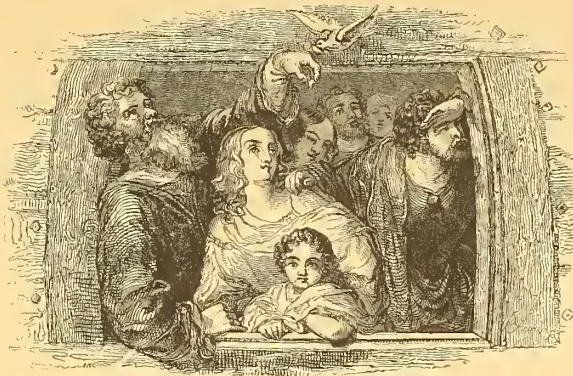
When the ark was finished God told Noah to take two of every kind of animal and bird, and seven pairs of every kind that were good for food, and bring them into the ark. He was to take food for them and for himself and his family, and he was to make all ready at once, for in seven days the rain was going to begin. So Noah collected the animals and birds and caused them to go into the ark; no doubt God helped him and his sons to gather them. When they were all in, Noah went in and his wife, and his three sons and their wives, and God shut the door upon them.

Then it began to rain: not such a rain as even the worst that we have ever seen; the water poured down in great sheets, as if the windows of heaven had been opened. For forty days and forty nights it rained this way. First the brooks overflowed their banks, and then the lakes and seas became swollen, until the whole world looked like a great sea.

At first the people thought it was a severe storm which would soon come to an end. As the low ground became covered they fled to the hills and all the high points they could reach. But still the waters rose and rose; the terror of the people became greater and greater. Oh, how they



must have gazed after the ark, riding safely on the top of the water, and wished that they had gone in there before it was too late!



But the water kept on rising, rising, until the highest point of land was covered, and every one in the world, except those eight men and women in the ark, was drowned.

Not only all the people were drowned, but so were all the beasts and fowls and insects that were upon the earth. Nothing could live in that wide, deep waste of water.

But Noah and his family rode secure upon the top of the waves. God was their keeper, and he let no evil befall them. For a hundred and

fifty days the waters prevailed, and by that time there was no chance of anything being left alive.

After the rain had ceased God caused a strong wind to blow to dry up the water, and by the end of the hundred and fifty days the water had gone down so far that the ark rested on a high mountain. This mountain was one of the peaks of Ararat, in Armenia, west of the Caspian Sea. There was still no dry land to be seen; only the ark rested on the highest mountain-top. It was two months and a half after that when the tops of the hills all about came to view again.

Noah wanted to know how it was outside of the ark, and so one day he opened a window of the ark and sent forth a raven. The raven is a wild bird, and it kept on flying to and fro, but it did not come back into the ark.

Noah waited a week and then he tried again, but this time he sent forth a dove. The dove flew all around, but she found no rest for the sole of her foot, and so she came back and pecked at the window of the ark, and Noah put forth his hand and drew her in.



He waited another week, and then he sent the dove out again. This time when she came back she brought something with her : it was an olive leaf which she had plucked off from the limb of a tree. Then Noah knew that the water had gone down enough to allow the trees to put forth their leaves. He waited one week more, and sent forth the dove again. This time she did not return, and Noah knew that the waters were dried up.

Still he did not go out of the ark, but waited until God, who had shut him in, should bid him go forth on the dry land. But he lifted off the roof from the ark and let the sweet air of heaven blow into all its crowded corners. How strange the world must have looked to Noah and his family as they gazed upon it from the high mountain-top on which their ark was resting ! As far as the eye could reach there was



not a house nor any sign of any human being, but everywhere the young grass was springing up fresh and green, and the trees were putting forth their leaves, and the tender flowers were budding and blooming, and all the world was clean and bright and

sweet, with no trace of sin anywhere. How long would it be before the effects of sin would begin to show themselves in this new earth?

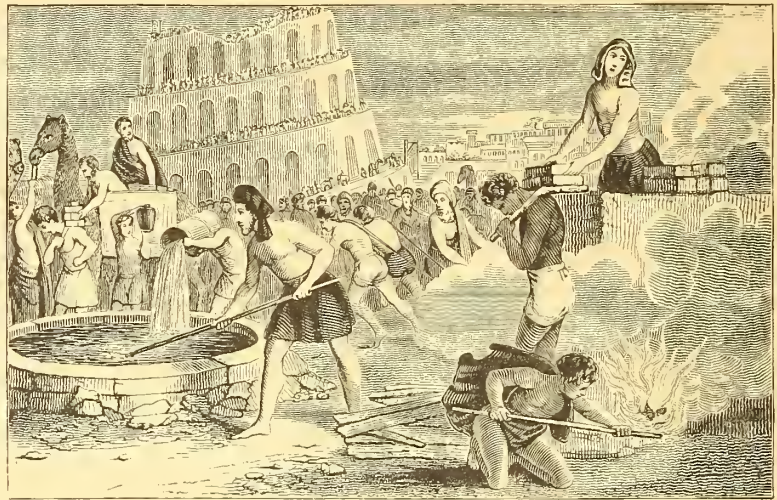
At last the longed-for word came, and God spoke to Noah and said, "Go forth of the ark, thou and thy wife, and thy sons and thy sons' wives with thee." And God told him to let out all the cattle and the wild beasts and the birds and the insects and creeping things that he had taken with him into the ark. How happy all the animals must have been once more to lie down on the green grass and to drink from the clear, sparkling brooks that flowed down the mountain-side!

The first thing that Noah did was to build an altar to God and to offer upon it a sacrifice of thanksgiving. His wife and children all joined him in his offering and in praying to God and praising him for his great mercy towards them.

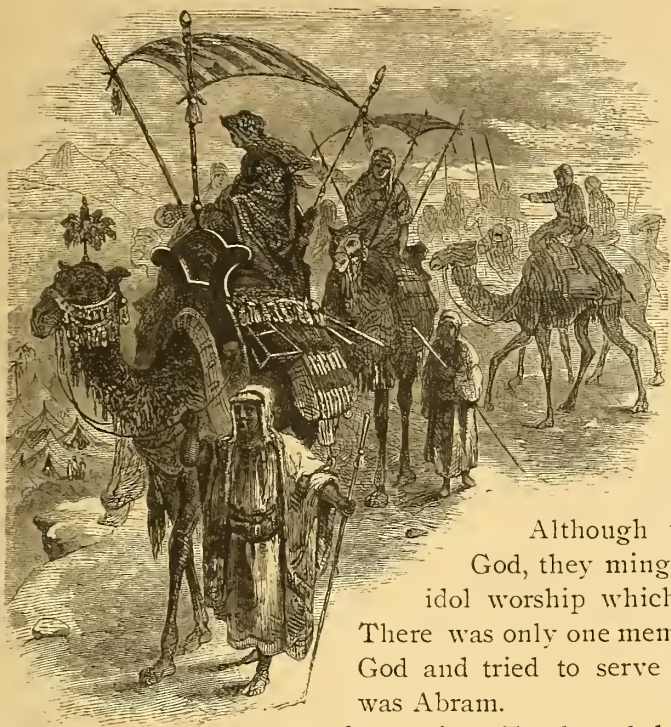
Then God told Noah that he would never again send a flood to destroy the world. He bade Noah look up to the sky and behold the rainbow, and said that the rainbow should be the sign of this promise. So whenever it rained and a bow appeared in the clouds, all people might know that God was not going to punish men again in this way.

After this children were born to Noah's sons, and they grew up and had children, until at length there were many people in the world. And all of them spoke one language. But they grew to think less and less about God, and to worship him less humbly. And finally they resolved to build a great tower that should reach up to

heaven, that they might make themselves a great name. So they went to work and made bricks, for there were no stones in that part of the country where they were living, and the soil was clay, of which bricks are made. They cemented the bricks together with something which they found floating on the river. It was bitumen, which is a kind of pitch. There



are springs of bitumen now near the river Euphrates, and it floats down the river now, just as it did in those days. And they laid the foundation of an enormous tower, and built upon it until it was very high. But God was not pleased with this, and he confused their language so that they could not understand one another. So they left off building the tower, for they could no longer work together, and it was never finished. The name of the tower was Babel, which means Confusion. There are ruins to this day, near the river Euphrates, which are thought to be those of the tower of Babel.



As time went on, men began to worship idols and to forget the true God.

Now in the land of Mesopotamia, far away to the south of the mountains of Ararat where the ark had rested, there lived a family who worshipped the true God, while all the people around them were idolaters. This family consisted of an old father, named Terah, his three sons, Abram, Nahor, and Haran, with their wives, and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran.

Although this family worshipped the true God, they mingled their service of him with the idol worship which was going on all around them. There was only one member of the family who truly loved God and tried to serve him in the right way; that one was Abram.

After a time Terah and his family moved away from their home in Ur of the Chaldees, and went southward. Haran had already died, but the rest of the family set forth, a goodly company, riding upon camels, and followed by their flocks and herds and by their tribe of herdsmen and servants, for they were very rich. They came to a land called Haran, and there they stayed for a time, and there the old father, Terah, died.

But Haran was not the place where God wanted his own people to be. God had chosen Abram to be the father of a great nation, who should keep alive a knowledge of the true God; and He told him to leave his family and friends, and go still farther south-westward, to a land that He would show him, for He was going to make him a blessing to the world.

Abram was seventy-five years old, and had no child. But this did not make him doubt God. He at once obeyed God. He gathered together his flocks and herds, and his herdsmen and servants, and set out, and his brother Haran's son, Lot, joined him.

After many wanderings they settled in a rich country between the river Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea, and there they built an altar to God, as they had done in every place where they had stopped. And here Abram intended to remain; but after a time he found that his herdsmen and those of his nephew, Lot, were quarrelling about wells and pasture-lands, for they had grown so rich in cattle that there was not room for them both. So they agreed to part company, and Lot chose to go southward

and live in the plain of Sodom, which was very fertile and beautiful, and Abram moved northward, to a place that was afterwards called Bethel.

Lot had not long lived in the plains of Sodom when a war broke out between the people of that country and the king of a powerful nation to the eastward. In the course of the war the people of Sodom were defeated, and many of them were carried away as prisoners, and among them Lot was carried off, with his family and all his goods. The news was soon brought to Abram. Now Abram was so rich a man that he had three hundred trained soldiers of his own. Besides this, he had made friends with the native tribes of the country, and with their soldiers and his own he pursued



after the victorious army, defeated it in battle, and rescued Lot and his property. As they were on their way back in triumph, two kings came out to meet him. One was the conquered king of Sodom, who came to thank Abram for the rescue of his

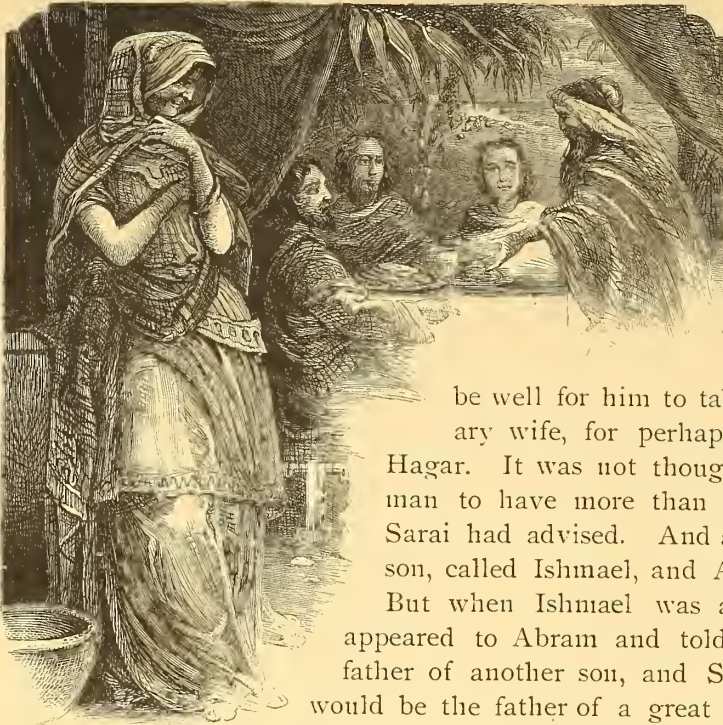
people: the other was Melchizedek, king of Salem, and he was also a priest of the Most High God. Melchizedek is the first priest whom we read about in the Bible, and we know nothing more about him than that he was a priest of the true God, and that Abram knew it, and gave him *tithes*, that is, a certain portion of all that he had, because he was the priest of God. Melchizedek blessed Abram, and they ate together, and then Abram went on his way.

Lot and his servants went back to the plain of Sodom, and before long Lot moved



into the city of Sodom. Now this was a very wicked city, so wicked that at last God resolved to destroy it. But for Abram's sake he sent an angel to warn Lot of what he was going to do, and tell him to save his life by flight. So Lot and his wife and his two daughters hastened out of the city, and as soon as they were gone the Lord rained fire and brimstone upon the wicked city and destroyed it utterly.

Lot's wife did not want to go; she was sorry to leave Sodom; and, as the others were hastening away, she lingered behind them, looking back with longing to the wicked city. And while she was looking she became changed into a pillar of salt. But Lot and his two daughters fled, as fast as they could, to the mountains, and they took refuge there in a little city called Zoar.



Now Abram and Sarai had been living for about eight years in the land to which God had told them to go, and still they had no child, although God had promised to make Abram the father of a great nation. And Sarai had a maid, named Hagar, an Egyptian woman, and she told Abram that it would

be well for him to take Hagar for a sort of secondary wife, for perhaps God would give a child to Hagar. It was not thought wrong in those days for a man to have more than one wife, and Abram did as Sarai had advised. And after a time Hagar had a little son, called Ishmael, and Abram loved him very much. But when Ishmael was about thirteen years old God appeared to Abram and told him that he was to be the father of another son, and Sarai its mother, and that son would be the father of a great nation, through which should come a blessing to all the world. And as a token of this God changed Abram's name to Abraham, which means "father of a multitude," and Sarai's name was changed to Sarah, which means "a princess."

Abraham believed God, though it must have been hard to believe when he had already waited so long and was now ninety-nine years old. It is because of his great faith that he is called "the father of the faithful" and "the friend of God." And God made a covenant with Abraham, and promised to be a God to him and to his children and to give them all that land of Canaan for their own.

Not long after this, as Abraham sat in his tent door in the heat of the day, he saw three men coming towards him. Abraham thought that they were men, but in fact two of them were angels, and one was the Lord. Abraham ran to meet them, and asked them to stop and rest in his tent; and he went to Sarah and told her to hasten and bake some cakes of fine flour, while he had one of his young men kill a calf and cook it. When all was ready, Abraham carried the food out and placed it before the three men, and waited upon them while they ate.

When they had finished eating they asked where Sarah was, and they told Abraham that at that time the next year Sarah should have a little son. Sarah was standing behind the tent door, and she heard what was said, but she could not believe it, for she and Abraham were now old, and she had long given up the hope of a son. So Sarah laughed, not believing what the men said. But the Lord said, "Why does

Sarah laugh? Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Then Sarah said, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid; but she did not know that it was the Lord to whom she spoke.

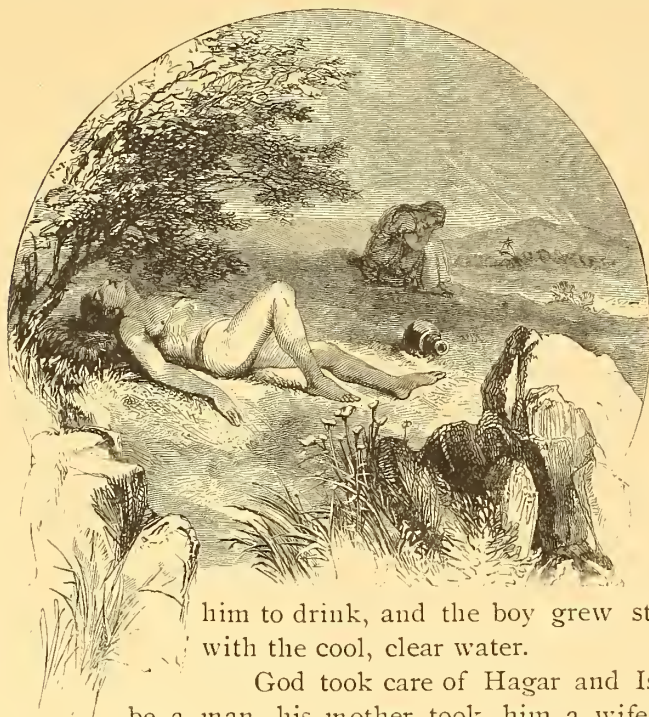
The next year Sarah had a little son, as the Lord had promised, and then she and Abraham were very happy. They called their little son Isaac, as God had told them to do; and when Isaac was weaned they made a great feast and rejoiced very much.

By this time Ishmael had grown to be a pretty large boy, and something that he did or said at the weaning-feast made Sarah displeased with him, and she told her husband to send away Ishmael and his mother, for she would not have the son of a bondwoman—as Hagar was—to be heir with her son Isaac. Abraham did not wish to do so unkind a thing, for he loved his son Ishmael, but Sarah insisted, and finally God spoke to him and told him to do as Sarah had said, for Isaac was the son of promise, and it was Isaac's descendants who were to be the nation of which should come the Saviour who was to bless the whole world. And God promised to take care of Ishmael, and to make him also the father of a great nation.

So Abraham called Hagar and Ishmael, and gave them some food and a bottle of water, and sent them away into the wilderness. Hagar and Ishmael wandered about in



the wilderness for a time, and at last the water in their bottle was all gone, and they could find no more. The hot sun streamed down upon them and parched them, and they suffered greatly. Then Hagar laid Ishmael down under one of the low shrubs that grow here and there in the wilderness, and she herself went and sat a little way off, for she thought that Ishmael was dying, and she could not bear to see him die.



And she lifted up her voice and wept aloud in her great grief.

Then a voice called aloud to her, "What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not, for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is."

It was an angel of the Lord who was speaking to Hagar, and he told her to go and lift up the lad and take care of him, for God was going to make him the father of a great nation.

Then the Lord opened Hagar's eyes, and she saw a spring of water, and she went and filled her bottle with water, and carried it to Ishmael, and gave

him to drink, and the boy grew strong again when he was refreshed with the cool, clear water.

God took care of Hagar and Ishmael, and when the boy grew to be a man, his mother took him a wife out of Egypt, which was her own country; and Ishmael became the father of twelve sons, and they had many descendants. The descendants of Ishmael are called Arabs: there are very many of them to this day in Arabia and other parts of Asia. They worship the true God, but they do not believe in his son Jesus Christ, but in a man called Mohammed, who lived about twelve hundred years ago, whom they call the Prophet of God. The Arabs are a wandering people, who still live in tents as their forefather Ishmael did.

Abraham and Sarah and Isaac lived happily together until Isaac was grown to be a large boy, and then a great trial came to Abraham. God wanted to test his faith still farther, and he therefore gave him a command that was very hard to obey. He said to Abraham, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and offer him for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

Did Abraham obey God, when He asked of him so hard a thing as this? Yes; though he could not see how God's promise to make him the father of a great nation was to be kept if he offered Isaac for a burnt-offering, Abraham knew that nothing was too hard for the Lord, and he had faith that God would keep all his promises.



And so, early the next morning, Abraham arose, and saddled his ass, and called Isaac and two of his young men, and made ready some wood for the offering, and they set forth. For two days they journeyed, and on the third day Abraham saw the place that God had told him of. Then Abraham told the young men to stay where they were, with the ass, while he and Isaac went and worshipped God. And he laid the wood upon Isaac's shoulders, and he took a knife and fire in his hand, and they went up the mountain together.

Then Isaac said, "My father, here are the wood and the fire, but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" And Abraham answered, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for the burnt-offering." So they went on together.

When they had come to the place, Abraham built an altar and laid the wood upon



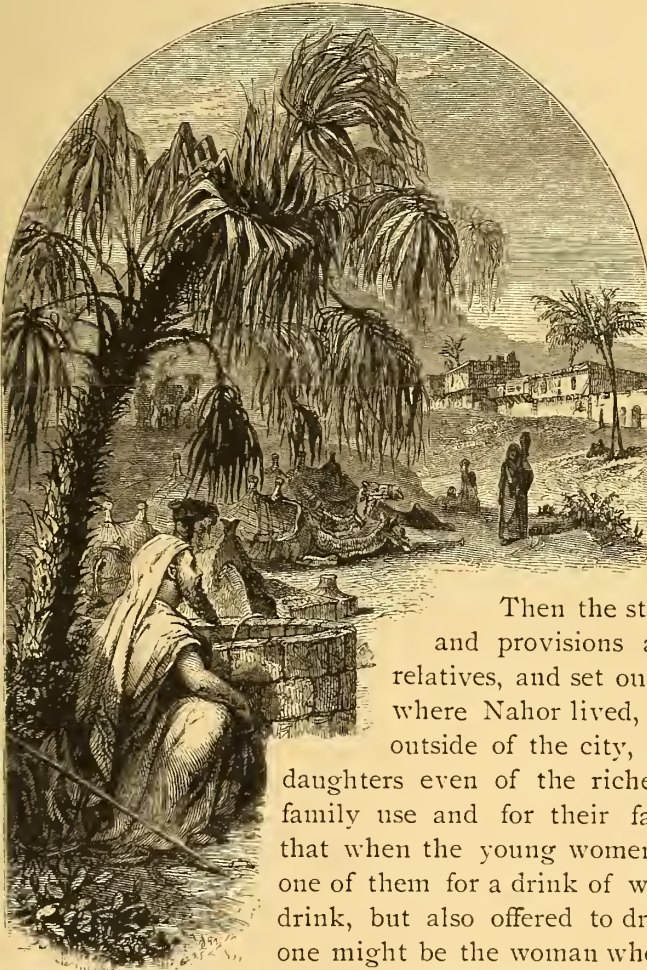
it, and then he bound Isaac's hands and placed him on the altar, and reached out his hand for the knife.

Suddenly a voice called to him, "Abraham! Abraham! Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me."

Then Abraham saw a ram, caught in the thicket by his horns, and he killed the ram and offered it for a burnt-offering upon the altar. And Isaac and he went back to where the young men were, and they all went home happily together. And God spoke to Abraham again, and repeated all the promises he had made to him before, saying that his descendants should be a great nation, and that one of them should bless the whole world. That one was Jesus Christ, who was born more than eighteen hundred years later, and whose mother was a descendant of Abraham.

Some years after this Sarah died, and was buried in a cave called the cave of Mach-

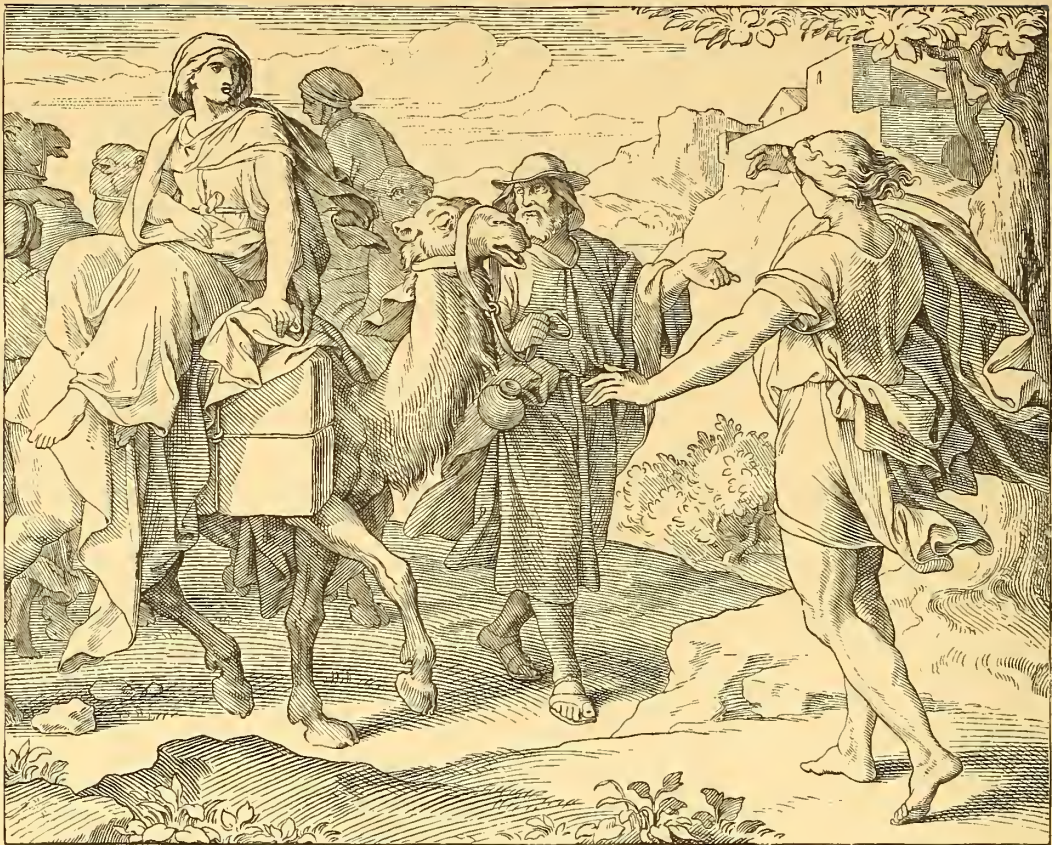
pelah. Isaac mourned much for his mother, for he loved her very dearly. Isaac and his father lived on together among their people, but Abraham was growing very old, and he wanted to see Isaac married before he died. He did not wish Isaac to marry one of the daughters of the people of that country, for they all worshipped idols. He therefore called his steward, who was over all his people, and told him to take camels and servants, and go back to Haran in Mesopotamia, where his brother Nahor's family lived, and get a wife for Isaac from among his cousins there.



Then the steward took ten camels, and servants and provisions and rich presents for his master's relatives, and set out; and in time they came to the city where Nahor lived, and sat down by a well, which was outside of the city, to rest. It was the custom for the daughters even of the richest men to draw the water for the family use and for their fathers' flocks, and the man prayed that when the young women came to draw water, if he asked one of them for a drink of water, and she not only gave him to drink, but also offered to draw water for his camels, that this one might be the woman whom God had chosen for Isaac's wife.

Very soon a beautiful young woman came down to the well and filled her water-jar. And the man went to her and begged for a drink of water from her jar. Then the girl said, "Drink, my lord," and when he had drunk she drew water and filled the trough that was placed there for the flocks to drink from.

The man wondered in himself at all this, and when she had finished drawing



the water, he took out a beautiful nose-ring of gold, such as was worn in those days, and a pair of heavy gold bracelets, and gave them to her, and asked her whose daughter she was. She answered that she was the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor. And then she invited the man to go home with her to her father's house and lodge there. This was the custom of those times, for there were no inns or hotels in those days. At this the man thanked God for having brought him to the house of his master's relatives; and when the girl heard him she ran home and told her mother, and her brother Laban went and brought the man and his servants and his camels to the house.

When he had told them that he was Abraham's servant, and that he had come for a wife for his master's son, and how he had prayed, and the answer to his prayer, they were much surprised. They asked Rebekah if she would go and be Isaac's wife, and she said she would go. Then the man gave rich presents to Rebekah, and to her mother and brother, and the next morning Rebekah and her nurse, Deborah, and her waiting women, set out with the steward to go to Canaan.

After several days of travelling, one evening Rebekah saw a man walking in the fields. It was Isaac, who had gone out to walk and think, and he looked up and saw

the camels, and knew that his father's steward had come back. When Rebekah saw Isaac she got down from the camel and put on a long veil, and Isaac came to meet her and took her into his mother's tent, and she became his wife, and Isaac was comforted for his mother's death.

It was twenty years before Isaac and Rebekah had children, and then twin sons



were born to them. Their names were Esau and Jacob. As they grew older, Esau became a great hunter; but Jacob was of a more quiet mind, and liked better to stay at home with his mother. Esau was his father's favorite, but Rebekah loved Jacob best. Esau was the elder of the two twins, and therefore the birthright or headship of the family belonged by right to him, but he cared little about it, and Rebekah was very anxious that her favorite, Jacob, should have it. Finally, one day when Esau came in from hunting, very hungry, he saw Jacob eating a pottage of red lentiles, and begged for some. Jacob would not give him any until Esau promised to sell his birthright for it, and Esau, saying to himself that if he

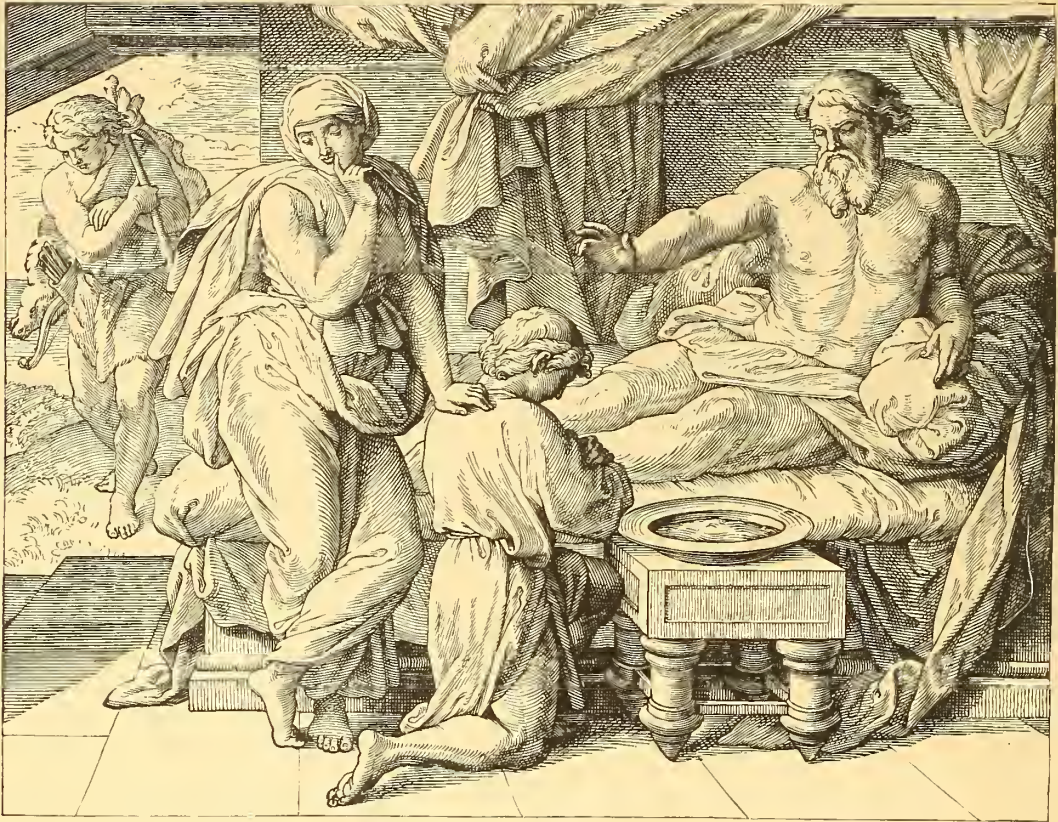
starved to death the birthright would be of no use, sold it to Jacob for a mess of pottage.

By this time Isaac was getting old and his eyes were growing dim, and one day he called Esau, and told him to take his bow and go hunting, and kill a deer and make him a savory dish such as he loved, that he might give him his blessing before he died. Rebekah heard what Isaac said, and she wanted Jacob to have the blessing, and so as soon as Esau was gone she called Jacob, and told him to go and kill two kids and bring them to her, and she would make a savory dish of them for him to take to his father, that he might bless him. Jacob was almost afraid to do this: he said that Esau was a hairy man and he was a smooth man, and his father would find out the deceit and would curse, instead of blessing him. But his mother urged him, and he went and killed the kids. Then his mother made the savory dish, and she took the skins of the kids and put them on Jacob's hands and on the smooth part of his neck, and she bade him put on some of Esau's clothes, and sent him to his father with the savory dish. When Jacob came to his father, Isaac asked him who he was, and Jacob answered, "I am Esau, thy first-born." Isaac was surprised at his coming so soon, and asked him how he could have found the venison so quick, and Jacob answered, because God had brought it to him. So one lie leads to another.

Still Isaac could not feel satisfied, and he bade his son come near that he might feel him. When he had felt his hands, he said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." And he thought it must be Esau, so he ate the meat, and afterward he blessed Jacob, asking of God all his richest blessings, and that this son

might be lord over his brethren, and that every one should be blessed who blessed him, and cursed who cursed him.

Jacob had hardly risen from his knees and gone out, when Esau came in with his



savory meat and asked for his father's blessing. Isaac was much surprised and trembled greatly and said, "Who? Where then is he that hath taken venison and brought it to me, and I have eaten, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed." Then Esau knew that his brother had gained the blessing by a trick. He cried with a very bitter cry, "Bless me, even me also, O my father!" And Isaac did bless him, but not with such a blessing as he had given to Jacob.

Then Esau hated Jacob, and he said that his father would soon die, and then he would kill Jacob. Rebekah heard that Esau had said this, and she called Jacob and told him to go away to Padan-aram, in Mesopotamia, and live with her brother until his brother's fury was over, and then she would send for him to come back. So Jacob bade his father and mother good-by, and set forth alone by himself.

He travelled all day, and when night came he took a stone for his pillow and lay down to sleep. And he dreamed that there was a ladder reaching up to heaven, and

that the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And he dreamed that he saw God above the ladder, and that God spoke to him and told him that he was the God of his fathers, Abraham and Isaac, and that he would give to Jacob the land that he was lying on, and that he should be the father of a great nation, in whom all the earth should be blessed. And God told Jacob that he would be with him in all his journeyings.

When Jacob awoke he said, "How dreadful is this place ! This is none other but

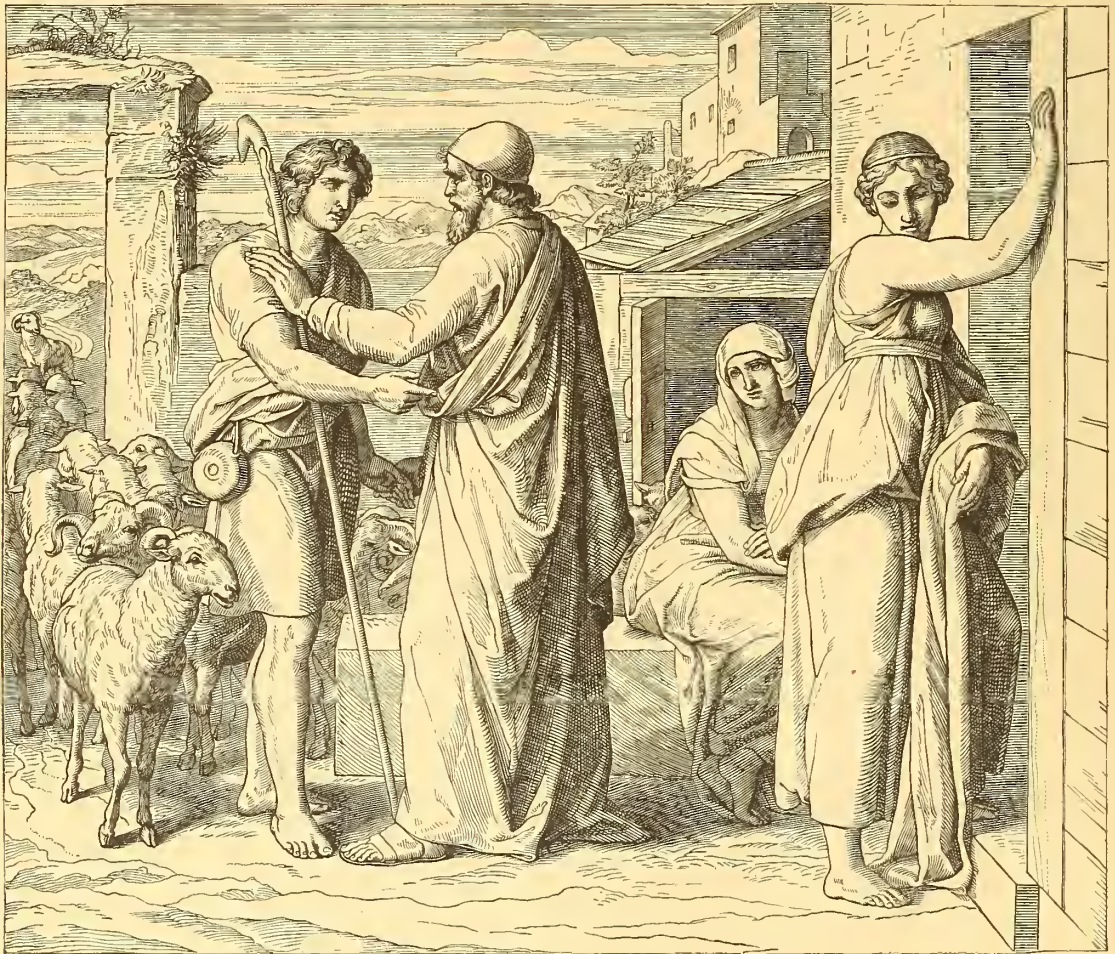


the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." And he took the stone which had been his pillow and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon it, and he called the place Bethel, which means the house of God. This was the very place where Abraham had lived long years before, when he had first parted company with Lot. And Jacob made a promise to God that if he would go with him and watch over him, he would take him for his God, and would give a tenth of all that he had to God.

Then Jacob went on and came to Padan-aram, and sat down by the well. There were flocks of sheep all around the well waiting to be watered, and Jacob asked the

shepherds if they knew Laban, and they said that they did, and that his daughter Rachel was just then coming with her father's sheep. And Jacob saw a beautiful girl leading a flock of sheep, and Jacob went and rolled away the stone from the well's mouth and watered her flocks, and then he kissed her and told her that he was her cousin, and he wept for joy at seeing her.

Rachel ran and told her father, and he ran to meet Jacob, and invited him to go home with him. And Jacob went and stayed with him for about a month, helping him with the care of his flocks. At the end of that time Laban asked Jacob what wages he wanted for serving him. Now Laban had two daughters—Leah and Rachel. Rachel was the younger and prettier of the two, and Jacob loved her, so he said that he would serve Laban seven years for Rachel. Laban agreed to this, and Jacob served him seven years, and they seemed only a few days, so dearly did he love Rachel, and so willing was he to do anything to win her for his wife.



At the end of the seven years Laban made a great wedding feast and gave his daughter to Jacob. The girl was closely veiled, as was the custom, and it was not until after they were married that Jacob discovered that it was not the beautiful and beloved Rachel, but her sister Leah, who had been given him. Of course he was displeased and spoke sharply to Laban; but Laban said it was not the custom of the country to let the younger sister be married before the elder, and that Jacob might have Rachel too if he would serve seven years more for her. This Jacob promised to do, and a week after his marriage to Leah he married Rachel, and worked seven years more to pay for her.

Leah became the mother of four sons, but Rachel had no children. As she greatly longed for a son, she finally asked Jacob to take her maid Bilhah for a secondary wife, as Abraham had taken Hagar, that she might adopt Bilhah's children for her own. Jacob did so, and Bilhah had two sons. But when Leah saw this she also gave her maid Zilpah to her husband for a wife, and Zilpah also had two sons; and after that Leah herself had two more sons and a daughter. Finally God heard Rachel's prayers, and sent her a little son of her own. Rachel's baby was named Joseph, and he had a very wonderful history, as we shall see.

Jacob had now lived twenty years with Laban, serving him faithfully all the time, and although Laban had been unfair to him in other matters besides that of his wives, and had changed his wages many times, yet the Lord had so blessed and prospered Jacob that he was a very rich man. And now the time had come when God wanted Jacob to go back to his own country. A great deal had happened during the twenty years that he had been gone. His old father Isaac still lived, his brother Esau had become a rich and powerful sheik, or head of a tribe, but his doting mother Rebekah was dead, and he would never see her again. But the word of the Lord had come to him to go back to the land of Canaan, which was the Land of Promise; and he gathered together all his flocks and his herds, and the many servants who helped him take care of them, and set his wives and children upon camels, and went forth. He travelled many days and came near to Canaan, but he was also drawing near to the borders of Edom, where his brother Esau lived. Jacob sent messengers before him to tell his brother that he was coming, and to find out how he felt towards him. The messengers soon came



back to say that they had met Esau, and he was coming to meet them with four hundred men.

Is it surprising that Jacob was afraid? Was it likely that Esau had forgotten the mean trick he had played upon him twenty years before? Jacob did the most prudent thing he could : he divided all his flocks and herds into two bands and sent them on by different roads, hoping that one band at least might escape his brother's anger. And he chose out a large number of sheep and goats and camels and cattle, more than five hundred in all, and put them in charge of servants, and sent them forward as a present



for Esau, hoping in this way to turn away his anger. Then when all the flocks and herds had gone on he sent his wives and children across the brook Jabbok, at which they had arrived, and bade them spend the night there, while he himself stayed alone on the other side of the brook.

What did he stay there for? Ah, Jacob knew that with all the care he had taken, the most important thing was yet to be done. He stayed alone that he might pray to God. And while he was praying, in an agony of dread of what Esau might do, and sorrow for what he himself had done twenty years before, an angel came and wrestled with him. Jacob understood what it meant: he was to put forth all his strength to



overcome the angel, just as he must pray with all his heart if he was to get God's blessing. All night he wrestled with the angel, and when morning came he had prevailed. The angel gave him the blessing that he asked for, and he told him that he should no more be called Jacob, the Supplanter, but Israel, the Prince of God, "for as a prince hast thou had power with God, and hast prevailed." And Jacob called the name of that place Peniel, the Face of God, for he said, "I have seen God face to face, and my life has been preserved."

The sun was rising when the angel left him, and he crossed over the brook and prepared to meet his brother. He put his wives and children upon camels, first the two handmaids, Bilhah and Zilpah, and their children, then Leah and her children, and behind them all, in the safest place, the well-beloved Rachel and Joseph. Then he went before them, for Esau and his train were already in sight, and he bowed himself seven times before his brother.

And what did Esau do? Bid his soldiers fall upon him and kill him? No, he ran and met him and fell on his neck, and both the brothers wept together, tears of forgiveness and of penitence and joy.

Then Jacob brought his wives and children to speak to his brother, and Esau asked him what was the meaning of the drove of cattle that he had met. Jacob told him it was for a present; and Esau at first refused it, saying that he had enough, but when Jacob urged him he took it.

Then Jacob went on, stopping for a time at various places, but all the time going on to the south, to Hebron where his old father Isaac lived. On the way a great sorrow came to him; for his dear wife Rachel died as they were coming to Bethlehem—the place where Jesus Christ was afterwards born. She left a little baby boy, called Benjamin, and he was the delight and comfort of Jacob's old age.

Soon after this Jacob came to Hebron, and stayed with Isaac until he died. Esau came too, and the two sons buried their father in the cave of Machpelah, beside Rebekah, and near to Abraham and Sarah.

After this Israel, or Jacob, lived in Canaan, and his sons took charge of his flocks and herds, very much as he had taken care of those of Laban, when he was a younger man. They led them now to this part of the country, now to that, as they could best

find pasture for such great numbers of creatures. Joseph, whose mother was dead, was now seventeen years old, and he spent much time with his older brethren, going home at times to his father and his little brother Benjamin. The older brothers did not like Joseph: partly because he told their father of various wrong things that they did, and partly because he was their father's favorite. Jacob did not try to hide the fact that he loved Joseph better than his other sons. He made him dress differently from his brethren, not in the short shepherd's coat which they wore, but in the long robe with sleeves, and often of many colors, which princes wore. Worse than all, to his brothers, was the fact that Joseph dreamed strange dreams, which seemed to show that he expected to have some better lot in life than theirs. Once he told his brothers he had dreamed that they were all binding sheaves in the field,



and that his sheaf stood up and all their sheaves bowed to it. Again he dreamed that the sun and moon and eleven stars bowed down to him. Even his father reproved him for telling such a dream, and his brothers could not speak even peaceably to him.

One day, as the brothers with their flocks had been gone from home for some time, Israel bade Joseph go after them and find out how they were. It was some time before Joseph found them, for they had moved about several times, but finally he saw them at



a little distance. They, too, saw him, and they said to one another, "Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now, therefore, let us slay him and cast him into some pit; and we will say, An evil beast hath devoured him; and we shall see what will become of his dreams." But Reuben, the eldest brother, was not willing to do anything quite so wicked, and so he said, "Let us not kill him, but cast him into this pit." Reuben

meant to come back after the others were gone, and take his young brother out of the pit, and take him back to his father again.

All the brothers agreed to cast him into the pit, and so when he came up they seized him, and stripped off his fine coat that his father had given him, and cast him into the pit. Then they sat down to eat their dinner.

After a while Reuben went away for some purpose, and while he was gone a company of Ishmaelites passed by. They were going down to Egypt to sell spices and balm and myrrh. And Judah, the fourth brother in age, said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother."

All the brothers liked this plan, and they drew up Joseph out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver, and the Ishmaelites went on their way to Egypt carrying their new slave with them.



After a time Reuben came back and looked into the pit, but no Joseph was there. Then he rent his clothes, as a sign of his distress, and went to his brothers and told them that Joseph was gone. They probably told him that it was of no use for him to make any trouble about it, as it was then too late to help it, for he joined with them in the next act of their wicked scheme, and said no more about saving his young brother. They killed a kid and dipped Joseph's coat into the blood, and when they went back

to their father they carried the coat with them, and said to him, "This have we found; know now whether it be thy son's coat or no."

Jacob knew the coat well—the beautiful coat that he had had made with such pride and love for his favorite son. "It is my son's coat," he answered: "an evil beast hath devoured him. Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces."

Then the poor old father rent his clothes and mourned bitterly for the dear son, whom he never hoped to see again. All his sons and his daughters tried to comfort

him. How could those wicked sons see their father's deep grief and not tell him the truth? Their hearts must have been hard indeed, for they did not confess their sin, though their father refused to be comforted, and said that he should mourn for Joseph as long as he lived. And indeed it was many years that Jacob mourned for his son Joseph.



And where was Joseph all this time? The Ishmaelites carried him to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, who is called in the Bible the captain of the guard, and who was probably the chief of police of the whole kingdom. This was a very important office, and the man who held it was called "the two eyes of the king of Upper Egypt, and the two ears of the king of Lower Egypt," because he was as necessary to the king as his eyes and his ears. He had the charge of all prisons and prisoners and of all punishments and executions.

In this great man's house Joseph behaved so well, and served so honestly and faithfully, that he was trusted more and more, until at last Potiphar gave him charge over everything. And now Joseph, though he must have longed for his father and his home, would still have been very happy if Potiphar's wife had not been a very wicked woman and tried to make Joseph wicked too. In this she could not succeed: Joseph would not betray his master's trust; and when she found this to be so, his mistress became very angry with Joseph, and told wicked falsehoods to her husband about him. Potiphar believed his wife, and he gave command that Joseph should be shut up in prison.

But even in the prison Joseph behaved so well that the jailer soon learned to trust him, and gave him charge over the other prisoners. Now there were two famous prisoners at that time: one was chief butler and the other was chief baker of

Pharaoh, the king. One day, when Joseph came into their dungeon, he found them very sad. When he asked what was the matter, they told him that they had both dreamed strange dreams which they could not understand. They told Joseph their dreams. The chief butler said that he had dreamed that a vine had three branches, and it budded and brought forth ripe grapes: and Pharaoh's cup was in his hand, and he pressed the juice of the grapes into the cup and gave it to Pharaoh. Then Joseph told him that the three branches meant three days, and in three days he should be taken out of prison, and should be the king's chief butler as he had been before.

When the chief baker heard this he hoped that his dream had a good meaning too. And he began to tell it. He had dreamed that he had three baskets of baked meats for Pharaoh on his head, and the birds came and ate out of the baskets. Then Joseph said that the three baskets meant three days, and in three days the chief baker would be taken out of prison and hanged on a tree, and the birds would eat his flesh off his bones.



Joseph asked the chief butler to think of him when things went well with him, and try to get him released from prison, and the chief butler promised. But though both dreams came true, and in three days the chief butler was restored to his office, yet did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

So Joseph stayed on in prison, doing his duty and trusting in God, but often wondering why the chief butler had forgotten him. But God had not forgotten him, though the chief butler had, and at the right time he caused things to happen so that Joseph should be taken out of prison.

It was two full years after Joseph had interpreted these dreams, when one night Pharaoh had two dreams that troubled him very much. He sent for all the wise men in Egypt, but none of them could interpret these dreams.

Then the chief butler remembered Joseph, and told the king of the young man in the prison who had interpreted dreams so wonderfully. And the king gave orders that Joseph should be sent for. Joseph was summoned as hastily as possible, and as soon as he had washed and shaved and changed his clothes, he was brought before Pharaoh.

When Pharaoh saw him he said, "I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it."



Joseph answered, "It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

Then Pharaoh told his dream. He had dreamed that he was walking by the river Nile, which the Egyptians held to be sacred, since all their life depended on the overflowing of that river regularly every year. In Pharaoh's dream he had seen seven fine fat cows come up out of the river and feed in a meadow. And then seven other cows, very lean and ill-looking, came up also out of the river, and they ate up the seven fat cows; and when they had eaten them, they were just as lean and ill-looking as before. Then Pharaoh awoke, but he soon slept again, and dreamed that he saw seven fine full ears of wheat on one stalk, and seven thin ears, blasted with east wind, on another stalk: and the seven thin ears devoured the seven full ears. So he awoke.

Joseph told Pharaoh that both dreams meant the same thing; that there were going to be seven years of plenty, when everything would grow and bear a great deal of fruit, and after that seven years of famine, when very little would grow. And Joseph

advised Pharaoh to select some wise man to be over all the land, to take up the fifth part of all that grew during the years of plenty, and put it away in barns against the years of famine.

Pharaoh was pleased with this plan, and he said that there could be no wiser man than Joseph, in whom the Spirit of God was, and he made him the head over all the



land of Egypt, second only to himself. And he took off his signet ring and put it on Joseph, and had him clad in royal robes of fine white linen, and a gold chain hung around his neck, and made him ride in his own second chariot, and sent some one before him through the crowded streets to cry, "Bow the knee!" when he drove through the city.

What a change for Joseph, from the dark, damp dungeon to a palace and fine clothes and the king's second chariot! And still more, what a change from the care of a few miser-

able prisoners to the oversight and government of a whole nation. But Joseph had done his duty faithfully both in the prison and in Potiphar's house, and that was a good preparation for doing his duty in the palace.

Joseph had great storehouses built, and there he stored away quantities of corn against the years of famine. The king had given Joseph a new name, Zaphnath-paaneah, and he had given him for a wife the daughter of a very notable priest; and during these seven years of plenty two little sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, were born to him.

At the close of those years came on the years of famine. When the people had eaten up all that they themselves had saved, they came to Joseph, and he opened his great barns and sold them corn. The news that "there was corn in Egypt" spread very far, and people came from long distances to buy.

Among these strangers came a group of men that attracted Joseph's notice. They were ten strong, fine-looking men, who spoke another language than that of Egypt. Joseph knew that language well, and he knew the men too, though he had not seen them for twenty years. They were his brothers.

The men never dreamed that the great man on whom all their lives depended was the boy whom they had sold as a slave. And Joseph did not tell them, for he wanted to test them first. He spoke roughly to them, and pretended to think that they were spies from some distant country. The brothers told him that they were not spies, that they

were all one man's sons, and one of their brothers was dead, and the other, the youngest, was at home with their father. This was what Joseph most wanted to know, that his father and Benjamin were still alive. Still he must test them farther, and he said that he would not believe them till he saw that youngest brother, and that one of them must remain as a hostage until the others went and brought Benjamin. At this they said to one another that this was what they deserved for their treatment of their brother Joseph. They did not dream that Joseph understood them, for he had always spoken to them by an interpreter; but he did understand, and he had to go away and weep alone, so much did it move him.



Then he came back and bound Simeon before their eyes, and gave command that the sacks of the others should be filled with corn and that provision should be given them for the journey, that they might go home. He also gave secret orders that every man's money should be put in the mouth of his sack.

When they opened their sacks while on the journey they were surprised and frightened to find their money. And when they came home and told the whole story to their father he told them that they ought not to have said a word about Benjamin, and that Benjamin should not go back with them. "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me," said the sad-hearted old father.

But when the corn was all gone, and their father bade them go again and buy food, they told him that they could not go without Benjamin. And Judah asked his father to trust the boy with him, and he would be surety for his safe return. There was nothing to do but to consent. The brothers took a present for the man whom they so much feared, and double money for the corn; and they took Benjamin and went down to Egypt and stood before Joseph. When Joseph saw Benjamin he sent them to his house, telling them that they were to dine with him that day. At first they were afraid; but the ruler of the house spoke kindly to them, and gave them water to wash their feet, and brought out Simeon to them. So they took courage, and made ready the present they had brought for the great man against his coming at noon to dinner.

When he came he spoke kindly to them, and asked after their father, and said to

Benjamin, "God be gracious to thee, my son." And then he had to hasten away, for he could not control his tears at sight of his brother Benjamin.

When he had wept and washed his face, he came back, and they sat down to dinner, Joseph at a separate table. But first he seated them, according to their ages, and at this they wondered. When he sent food to them from his table he sent five times as much to Benjamin as to the others, for this was the way of showing favor in those days. But they were not jealous of Benjamin, and they had a very merry dinner.

We can imagine how happy the brothers were to set out the next morning, all safe and sound, and both Simeon and Benjamin with them. But their happiness was



short. They had not gone far when they were overtaken by the steward, who asked them why they had stolen his lord's silver cup. With one voice they all denied it, and they bade the steward search their sacks, saying that if he could find it he might take them all back for slaves. The steward said, Not so, but he with whom the cup was found should go back for a slave, and the rest might go home. Then the eldest brother opened his sack, and the next, and the next. Finally Benjamin opened his sack, and to their

horror there was the cup, for the steward had put it there by Joseph's command.

Then they all rent their clothes and went back with the steward to the city. They went straight to the great man, and fell down before him, and then Judah spoke. He told the whole story of their father's love for Benjamin, of his grief for the son who "was not," and he went over the story of all that had led to Benjamin's coming, and how their father had said that if Benjamin came not back it would bring down his gray hairs in sorrow to the grave. And Judah told how he had made himself surety for the lad to his father, and begged that he might remain as a slave instead of Benjamin: "Now, therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad, a bondman to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father."

Then Joseph could not refrain any longer, and he cried to all the Egyptians that stood by to go out. And when they were gone out, he wept aloud; and he said, "I am Joseph: doth my father yet live?" At first his brothers were too much frightened to



answer, but when they saw his tears, and heard his kind and forgiving words, they rushed into his arms, and embraced and kissed him, and they all wept together.

Soon the news got abroad that Joseph's brethren were come, and Pharaoh heard it, and he sent word to Joseph to send for his father, and his brothers' families, and keep them in Egypt through the five years of famine that were yet to come. So Joseph gave his brothers rich presents and sent them home for their families; and he sent wagons up from Egypt for his father and for his brothers' wives and children.

When the brothers reached their home in Canaan and said to their father, "Joseph is alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt," he could not believe it. But when he saw the presents, and the wagons that had been sent for him, he believed, and said, "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die."

So the whole family of Israel went down to Egypt. And when they drew near to the border of the country, Judah went on in advance to tell Joseph that they were coming. Then Joseph ordered his chariot and hastened to meet his dear old father;

and as soon as he saw him he fell on his neck and wept. And Israel said to Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive." He felt that he had nothing more to ask for; but there was much of happiness and comfort yet in store for the good old man before he died.

Then Joseph went and told Pharaoh that his family had come, and he took five of his brothers and presented them to Pharaoh. The king asked Joseph's brothers what their occupation was, and they told him that they were shepherds. Then Pharaoh allotted to them a certain district called the land of Goshen, where they could live and pasture their flocks and herds, and he bade Joseph select the most capable among them to have the charge over the royal shepherds and herdsmen.



After this Joseph took his father to see Pharaoh. Jacob was a very old man by this time: he told Pharaoh that he was a hundred and thirty years old. Pharaoh treated the noble old man with great respect, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

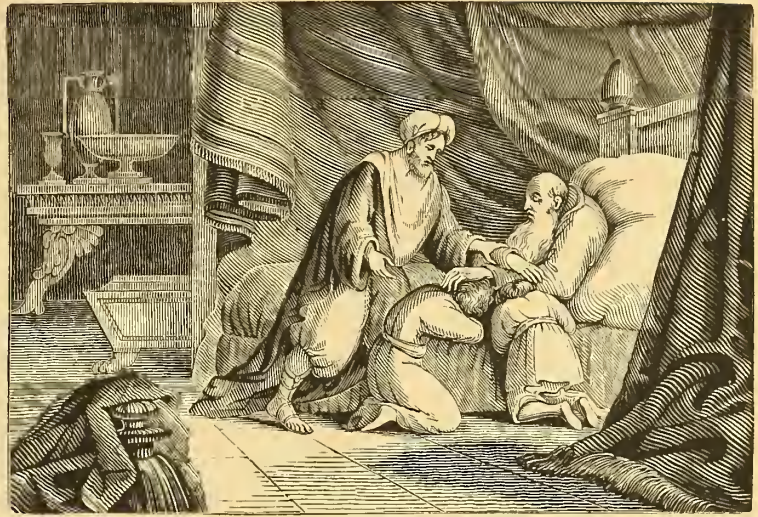
All through the time of famine Joseph saw to it that his father and brothers had no lack of food. When the famine was over they still remained in Egypt, and as the land of Goshen was one of the most fertile parts of Egypt, they soon became very prosperous. And now at last the troubled life of Jacob became calm and peaceful. Old as he was when he went to Egypt, he lived for seventeen years longer, with no care or sorrow, a serene and happy old age.

Still Jacob looked back with loving memory to his old home in the land of Canaan. He never forgot that it was the Land of Promise, the land which God had promised Abraham that his

descendants should inherit. And though he did not wish to go back there himself, he wanted to be buried there beside his father and grandfather; and one day when Joseph came to see him he begged Joseph to promise that he should be buried in Canaan, and Joseph promised. Joseph went often to see his father, we may believe, for he loved him very tenderly, but he was very much occupied with the affairs of the kingdom, not only during the five years of famine that yet remained, but even after that. Joseph managed very wisely for the king's interests, and proved to be one of the greatest rulers that had yet lived, and as the kingdom was a very great and powerful

one, he had many cares. But he never forgot his own relatives, nor neglected anything that was for their good.

One day it was told to Joseph that his father was ill; so Joseph took his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, and went to see his father. Jacob kissed and embraced them, and then they knelt to receive his blessing, Manasseh at his right hand and Ephraim at his left.



Jacob laid his hands on their heads, but he crossed them, laying the right hand on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and the left hand on the head of Manasseh, the elder. Joseph tried to change the hands, but his father said No: the tribe of Ephraim was to be greater than that of Manasseh. Then he blessed the boys, praying that the God of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, might be their God.

After this his sons gathered around his bedside and he blessed each one of them, telling them something of what should happen to their children in later days. And he bade them not bury him in Egypt, but take his body up to Canaan, and bury it in the cave of Machpelah, where Abraham and Sarah his wife had been buried, and Isaac

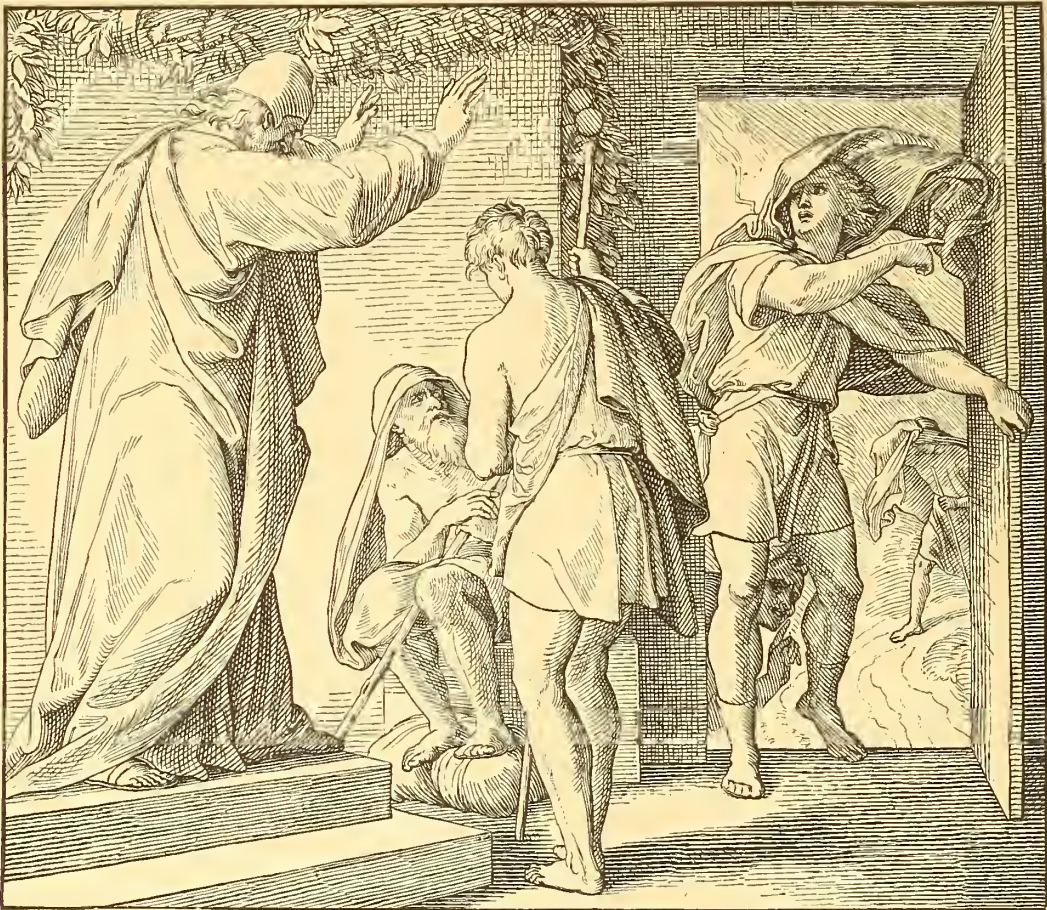


and Rebekah his wife, and where he had buried Leah. And when Jacob was dead, all his sons went with his body to Canaan. A great many Egyptians went with them, and they mourned for Jacob many days; so much so that the inhabitants of Canaan called the place Abel-mizraim, or the mourning of the Egyptians. When the mourning was ended, Jacob's sons went back to Egypt, for it was the will of God that they should stay in that country for a time; and there they remained for many years.

JOB.

Now there was a man named Job, who lived in a country eastward from where Abraham and his descendants lived. Job was a very rich man, and had great flocks and herds and many servants, and he had seven sons and three daughters. And Job was a very good man: he loved and trusted God, and believed that all His ways were right.

Then God tested Job, as he had tested Abraham, though not with the same trial, for he wanted to show to everybody that Job did not serve God simply because God prospered him, and he wanted to show even to Job himself what a strong power there is in faith in God to keep the soul in heavy trial.



One day, when Job's sons and daughters were all feasting in their eldest brother's house, a messenger came to Job and told him that the Sabeans, a wild tribe of the desert, had come upon the servants who had the charge of his oxen and asses, and had



killed all the servants and carried away the cattle, and only this one man had escaped to bring the news.

While he was speaking, another came and told him that all his flocks and herds, and the servants who took care of them, had been struck by lightning, and he only had

escaped to bring the news. Before he had finished his story, another came, who said that three bands of Chaldeans had come upon the men who kept the camels, and had killed them and carried away the camels. And while he was speaking, yet another came, and told him that a tornado had suddenly come up, and had wrecked his son's house, and all his sons and daughters had perished in the ruins.

When Job heard that he had thus been bereft, in a single day, of all his children and all his property, he rent his clothes and mourned, but not impatiently, for he only said, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord." In all this trial Job had not one sinful or rebellious thought.

Then God tried Job still further, for he caused him to have sore boils all over his body, so that he suffered dreadfully. And even his wife felt that he had a right to repine; but Job said, "What! shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord and shall we not receive evil?" And still his faith in God stood firm.

Now Job had three friends, and when they heard of his great sorrows they came to see him, and they sat down beside him and mourned with him for seven days. And at the end of that time Job spoke and bewailed his sad fate, but did not charge God with unkindness to him. But all his friends began to talk to him, and to tell him that he must have done something wrong in secret, or God would not have sent such sorrows upon him. For a long time they talked thus, first one and then another, and Job answered each one, insisting that sorrows did not always come as the punishment for sin any more than riches and comforts always came as a reward for doing right: that there was much in God's dealings with us that we could not understand, because God is so high above us, but that God always did right, and he was willing that God should do with him what seemed best. While they were talking, a young man named Elihu came and joined them. It was very hard for Job to have his friends think that all his trials came as a punishment for some secret sin. Perhaps this trial was even harder to bear than all that had gone before. But even this he bore nobly, and kept true to his faith.

Then God spoke to them all out of a whirlwind, and said that Job had spoken the thing that was right, and God reproved the three friends for their suspicions of Job and for their wrong thoughts about God. And he told them to bring some animals for a burnt-offering, in token that they were sorry for their wrong thoughts, and to ask Job to pray for them for God was pleased with Job. Then they offered the burnt-offering, and Job prayed for his friends, and God forgave them.

And when Job prayed for the friends who had been so harsh to him in his time of trial, at once his troubles were over, for he had learned for himself and had shown to others the lesson that God wanted to teach. He got well from his sickness, and his brothers and sisters all came to see him, and each one gave him a piece of money and a gold ear-ring or nose-ring, so that he was able to buy more cattle and sheep and camels; and God blessed him and prospered him, so that in the end he had twice as many cattle and flocks and herds and camels and servants as he had had at first. And God gave him again seven sons and three daughters, and the last years of Job's life were very happy and blessed.

EXODUS.

THE children of Israel stayed in Egypt a long time, several hundred years, until there were in all some three hundred thousand men, women, and children of them.

By this time the memory of Joseph was forgotten, and the Pharaoh of that time—all Egyptian kings were called Pharaoh—felt no kindness towards the Israelites on his account. He saw that they were getting to be a great people, and he feared that in case of war they would join the enemies of Egypt. The land of Goshen, where the Israelites lived, was on the eastern boundary of Egypt, just where an army from any other country would first meet the Egyptians, and the king thought that he could not trust the Israelites to be true to him in such a case. So he determined to break their



spirits by hard work. He set them to making brick, to build treasure cities for him, and he put taskmasters over them to punish them when they did not do all that was set them to do. These taskmasters made the lives of the children of Israel very bitter with hard labor and cruel treatment.

But this was not all. The king commanded that every boy-baby that was born should be thrown into the river. The girl-babies might be left alive, because there was



no danger of their joining the king's enemies when they grew up. Think of the sorrow in every home when every little boy-baby had to be drowned !

One mother resolved that her boy-baby should live. He was a lovely baby, large and strong, and she could not give him up, although she had another little boy named Aaron, three years old, who had been born before the cruel law was made. For three months she hid her baby in her own house; but a healthy, crowing baby is not easily hid, and at last the mother dared keep him no longer.

So she made a little ark, or basket, of the great paper-reeds that grew beside the river, and lined it with pitch to keep the water out, and there she laid her baby, and hid the ark among the reeds at the water-side, setting her little daughter Miriam to watch.

After a time a train of ladies drew near. One of them was dressed more richly than the others, and the women around her waved fans above her in the air. It was the daughter of the king, who had come with her maidens to bathe in the river. The

princess saw something strange among the reeds a little way off, and sent one of her maidens to see what it was. When the girl went, she found a covered basket, and when she opened it, there was a little baby!

The maiden brought the ark to the princess, and when she looked in the baby cried. That little voice touched the tender heart of the princess: she knew very well that this was one of the little babies who were to be drowned; but she could not help loving the baby, and she resolved to save it.

Little Miriam saw and heard it all, and when she found that the princess was going to save the baby, she came out of her hiding-place and said, "Shall I go and call one of the Hebrew women for a nurse for the baby?" (The Israelites were also called Hebrews.) And the princess said, "Go." Miriam ran, and whom did she bring? Whom, indeed, but the baby's own mother!

Probably the kind princess suspected who the woman was who came so hastily to offer herself as nurse. But it would not have been safe to act as if she thought so, and all she said was, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages." And she called the baby's name Moses, which means *drawn out*, for she said, "I have drawn him out of the water."

So little Moses stayed with his own dear mother until he was old enough to be educated, and then she took him back to the princess. She probably caused him to be educated in the famous university of Heliopolis, which was the greatest seat of learning in the world at that time; for the New Testament tells us that Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. But Moses knew that he was not an Egyptian, and when he grew old enough to understand them, his heart ached for all the troubles of his people.

It is probable that he spent much of his time watching the Hebrews at their work, and thinking how he might free them from their hard bondage. He little thought by what mighty acts God was going to set them free. But the time for God to do so had not yet come. Moses had yet much to learn before God could use his help in freeing his people.

One day, as he was watching some Hebrews at their work, he saw an Egyptian taskmaster treating one of them very cruelly. Moses could not endure this sight, and he looked this way and that, and when he saw no one looking, he killed the Egyptian and hid his body in the sand. The next day he went out, and saw two Hebrews fighting, and he tried to stop them, saying to the one that was in the wrong, "Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?"

But the Hebrew answered, "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?" and asked him if he meant to kill him as he had killed the Egyptian.

Then Moses was afraid, and he fled afar off into the land of Midian. There he stayed for forty years: he married and had two sons, and took care of his father-in-law's flocks, and during all that time he thought much about his people, we may be sure.

At last God appeared to him in a bush that burned with fire, yet without being burned up. God told him that the time had now come for the Israelites to go back

to the Promised Land, and that Moses must go and tell Pharaoh to send them away, and that he must guide them back to Canaan. God told Moses that his brother Aaron was coming to meet him, and they must go to Pharaoh together.

When Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and told him that Jehovah had sent them



to tell him to let His people go, Pharaoh spoke very proudly and said, "Who is Jehovah, that I should obey him? I know not Jehovah, neither will I let Israel go."

Then the Lord sent one plague after another upon the Egyptians—dreadful plagues which troubled the whole people: but none of them came upon the Israelites. And at each plague Pharaoh would promise that if Moses would pray God to take the plague away he would let Israel go; and yet, as soon as it was taken away, he would harden his heart and not let them go after all.

At last, when nine dreadful plagues had been sent upon them, God told Moses that he was going to send one more awful than any which had yet come, and that after that Pharaoh would keep his word. But first there was something for the children of Israel to do. God said that each family was to take a lamb and kill it on a certain day, and take some of its blood and put it on the lintel and door-posts of their houses. And then the lambs must be roasted, and when night came every member of each family must

dress ready for a journey, and gather around the table and eat the lamb with a sauce made of bitter herbs. They were to eat it standing, and in haste, and they were not to take time for their bread to rise, but were to eat it unleavened, that is, not risen, as a sign of great haste. For on that night the Lord would send his angel to kill the first-born son in every house in Egypt, except in the houses where there was blood on the door-posts. The eldest sons in all the Israelite families would therefore be safe, if the fathers obeyed this command of God.

All was done as God commanded, and the children of Israel ate their hasty meal in the dead of night. It was called the Passover, because the angel of the Lord was to *pass over* every house which had blood on the door. And while they were eating they heard a loud and terrible cry. It went up from every Egyptian house in the land, from





the king's palace to the meanest hut, for in all Egypt there was not a house where there was not one dead.

The Egyptians were ready enough now to have the Israelites go. Even if the king had still hardened his heart his people would not have let them stay. But Pharaoh wanted them to go, and he sent for Moses and Aaron, and told them to go at once, and take everything that they had. And the Egyptians urged them to take money and jewels and fine clothes and everything that they wanted, but only to go quickly.

So the children of Israel went away that very night, and Moses led them up towards the Red Sea, and the Lord went before them in a pillar of fire to give them light. And when morning came the pillar became a pillar of cloud, to show them the way.

They had not long been gone when Pharaoh again hardened his heart, and was sorry he had let them go. So he sent

for his officers and told them to get ready six hundred chariots, with horsemen and a great army, and chase after the Israelites and make them come back. And he had his own chariot made ready, and went with his army to chase after Israel.

Before very long they came in sight of them, for the Israelites, with all their flocks and herds and little children, were obliged to go very slowly. They had got as far as the shore of an arm of the Red Sea, and there they were encamped.

When the Israelites saw the Egyptians coming they were terrified, for they saw no way of escape: the water was before them and Pharaoh's army behind. And they said to Moses and Aaron, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness?" Moses did not lose patience when they spoke to him thus: he only said, "Fear ye not: stand still and see the salvation of the Lord."

And what did they see? Moses standing by the sea shore and lifting up his rod, and the waters parting this way and that. And between the waters, dry land that they could walk on. For the Lord caused a very strong wind to blow, such a wind as they had never known before, and it drove the water away. It was an awful storm, with thunder and lightning and blackness of darkness; but terrible as it was, the children of Israel had light, for the Lord moved the pillar of fire, and placed it behind them, between them and the Egyptian army: so it gave light to the Israelites, but the cloudy side

was towards the Egyptians, and it made the stormy night still darker and more awful to them.

Thus the children of Israel walked safely through the bed of the sea, and reached the other shore. The Egyptians soon came down to the bank, and when they saw the dry land they too went down into the bed of the sea, to chase after the Israelites. But God troubled the Egyptians—their chariot wheels came off, and the fierce wind and dark clouds with their lightning flashes frightened them; so at last they utterly lost heart, and said, "The Lord is fighting for the Israelites: let us go back and not pursue them any more."

Then they turned to go back: but it was too late. For now the last one of the



children of Israel was safe on the other shore, and God told Moses to stretch out his rod over the sea. And when he did so, the wind ceased and the water flowed back again into its place, and with all their haste it was not possible for the Egyptians to reach the shore. The waters overtook them, and the whole army of the Egyptians, their chariots and their horsemen, were drowned in the depths of the sea.

Then Miriam, the sister of Moses, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the other women took timbrels, and they danced a sacred dance, as was the custom in those days, and they sang a song of triumph, "Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." And Moses composed a beautiful song of thanksgiving which he and all the people sang before the Lord.

And now began a very strange life for the children of Israel. These men and women and children, as long as they could remember, had lived in a perfectly level country, watered by the great river Nile, where were large cities in which everything that was needful could be bought for money. Now they had come into a region of high mountains and lonely deserts, where were no gardens or cornfields, no cities, nor, indeed, any people except some wandering tribes. They were only eleven days' journey from Canaan, to be sure, but God did not wish them to go to Ca-

naan at once. He wanted them to stay in that lonely country until he had taught them many things about himself, and how he wanted to be worshipped, and how they were to serve him. So he told Moses not to lead them by the shortest road to Canaan, but to take them around through a wild region, partly desert, and with many high mountains, where they would be alone with God.

They could not buy food in such a wild and desolate country, but God was able to give them food. And as long as they needed it he rained manna down from heaven for them, and he made water to gush out where there was no water, so that the children of Israel never wanted for anything that was needful. And all the time that they were in the wilderness the pillar of cloud and of fire went before them. When it rested, they stopped and encamped, and when it went on, they went on. There was no danger of losing the way, for the Lord was their guide.

In the third month after they had left Egypt they came to the high mountain called Sinai, and God told Moses to make them all camp at the foot of that mountain, and wash their clothes, and prepare their hearts; for he was coming down upon that mountain to give them his laws. And Moses was to set bounds, beyond which no person or beast must pass, for if they rashly came too near the presence of God they would die. And on the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud over the mountain, and a smoke as if it were on fire, and a loud sound as of a trumpet. The people were full of awe and fear, but they came out of their tents and





stood around the foot of the mountain, as Moses bade them, and God spake to them out of the cloud.

Every child knows the words that God spoke to the Israelites on this solemn and awful day. *I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.* And all the other of the ten commandments. It was these words that the people, standing in that wild and rocky valley high up among the mountains, heard coming from the thick clouds which covered the mighty peak that towered above their heads. Could they ever forget that day, and the commandments of their God?

Who would believe that within six weeks they would have forgotten, and would be worshipping a calf of gold as an image of God? And yet so it was. For after God had spoken the commandments, and the thunders and lightnings had ceased,

the people went up to Moses and said, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die."

So God called Moses up into the cloud which was upon the mountain, to tell him all the things which he was to teach the children of Israel. And Moses remained up in the mountain with God for forty days and forty nights. And while he was there the people grew tired of waiting for him to come back, and they came to Aaron and told him that he must make them some gods to go before them, for they did not know what had become of Moses. And they were so unruly, and so noisy and troublesome that Aaron was afraid of them, and he told them to bring him all their gold, jewelry and ornaments, and when they had brought them he made a golden calf, which was a copy of one of the chief idols of Egypt.

When the golden calf was finished Aaron showed it to the Israelites, and they said, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt." And they made a great feast in honor of the golden calf, and sang and danced and offered sacrifices to it.

Now while this wild and noisy feast was going on, Moses came down from the mount. In his hand he held two flat stone slabs, or, as the Bible calls them, tables of stone, on which God had written the ten commandments. With Moses came his young attendant or minister Joshua, who had been waiting for him near the mount, and when

they came near to the camp Joshua heard the people shouting, and he said, "There is a noise of war in the camp." But Moses said, "It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome; but the noise of them that sing do I hear."

Soon they came near enough to see what it was; and when Moses saw it his horror



and wrath were very great. He dashed down the tables of stone that were in his hands and broke them, and then he rushed upon the people, and seized the calf and threw it into the fire, and then he ground it to powder and strewed it on the water and made the children of Israel drink of it. And Moses cried, "Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come unto me!" And the sons of Levi gathered around him, and they went through the camp and killed a great many of the men who had worshipped the idol.

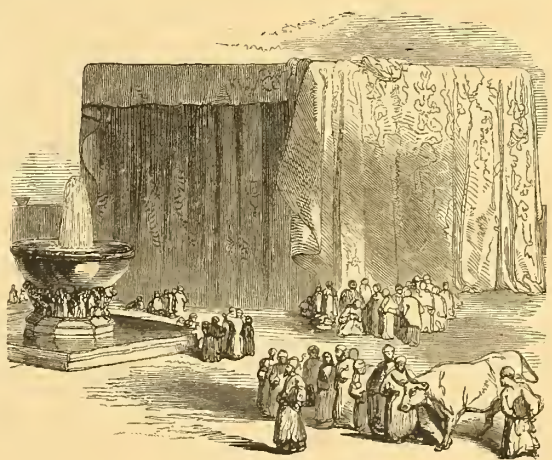
Then Moses went and prayed most earnestly to God to forgive this great sin of the children of Israel. And the Lord forgave them, and he called Moses up into the mountain again, and gave him two new tables of stone, with the commandments engraved upon them, and when Moses came down from the mountain carrying the



tables of stone his face shone so, from having been with God, that the people could not look on his face.

While Moses was on the mount, God had told him how he wanted to be worshipped by the Israelites. They were to make a tabernacle for his worship as we make churches now. The tabernacle was to be a large tent, made of boards of a precious kind of wood, overlaid with gold, and joined together by bars of wood overlaid with gold, run through silver sockets. Over this were to be hung heavily embroidered curtains of blue and purple, and an outer covering of expensive skins, probably sealskins, dyed a rich deep scarlet. Besides the outer curtains of the tabernacle there was to be a most beautiful inner curtain to divide the tabernacle into two parts. The larger part was to be called the Holy Place, and the smaller the Holy of Holies, and into that

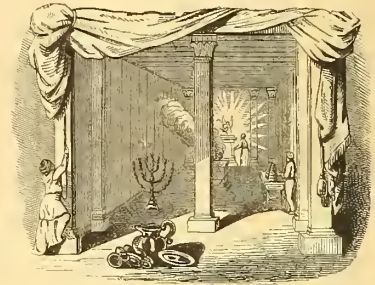
place no one was ever to go except once a year, when the high-priest was to lift the curtain and go behind it carrying the blood of a goat, which he was to offer for the sins of the people. It was not expected that the people would go into the tabernacle at all, for the worship of God, as we go into our churches. The tabernacle was far too small for that. There was to be a great court all around the tabernacle, and in that the people were to assemble to offer their sacrifices and to worship God. The court was to be enclosed by tall brass pillars and curtains of fine linen, and the curtain at the entrance, or gate of the court, was to be beautifully embroidered in blue and crimson. But the curtains of the tabernacle were to be lifted when the priests went in to offer incense so that the people could see and could join in prayer as the smoke of the incense ascended to God, for the rising smoke of incense was meant for a type or image of prayer, going up from the heart to God.





Aaron was to be high-priest, and his four sons were to be priests, and God had given command that very rich garments were to be made for them.

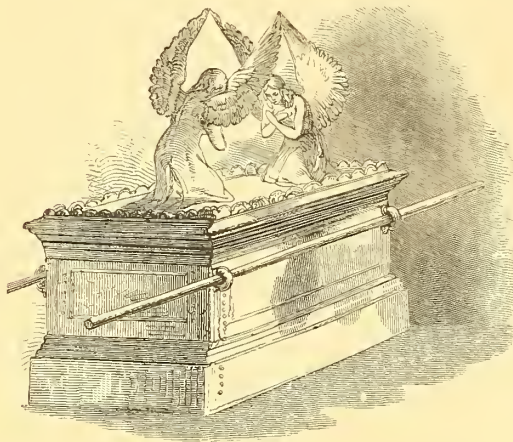
Then there was to be made a box of wood overlaid both within and without with gold, and with a heavy border or "crown" of gold around it, and the cover of pure gold. This box was called the Ark of the Covenant, and the cover was called the Mercy-Seat, and on the Mercy-Seat were to be two cherubim of solid gold with broad wings to reach from one side of the Holy of Holies to the other. In the ark the tables of stone were to be put.



The people were also to make a tall golden candlestick with seven branches, to give light in the Holy Place, and a golden altar, to burn incense on, and a great brazen altar to stand in the court of the tabernacle, to burn sacrifice upon, and a large brazen laver, or tank, to hold water for washings and many other things. The people were full of zeal when they heard what God wanted them to do, and they set to work with a will. Just a year from the time that they left Egypt all the things which God had commanded them to make were finished.

On the first day of the first month of the new year, God bade Moses set up the tabernacle. And Moses did so: he set up the gold-covered boards and fastened them together with the gold-covered bars, and threw the rich curtains over them, and he brought the ark of the covenant to its place in the Holy of Holies, and hung up the beautifully embroidered vail before it; and he put the table and the golden candlestick and the golden altar in the Holy Place and lighted the lamp of the candlestick, and

burned sweet incense on the altar. Then he set up the pillars and the hangings of the court, and put the great brazen altar for the burnt-offerings and the brazen laver in their places; and he brought Aaron and his sons and consecrated them and put their beautiful garments upon them.



Then all the people came and brought offerings, and the tabernacle was consecrated to God with great ceremonies. And a cloud came down and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, to show that God accepted this place as his place of worship, and that his presence was with the children of Israel.

LEVITICUS.

GOD told Moses what feasts and fasts and special services he wanted the Israelites to observe, and Moses told the people. There were to be three great feasts every year—the feast of the Passover, in memory of the day when the Lord brought them up out of Egypt; the feast of Pentecost, or of the First-fruits, when the first-fruits of everything were to be offered to the Lord; and the feast of Ingatherings, or of Tabernacles, when the work of harvest was over. This was the most joyful feast of all. And there was to be one solemn fast every year, called the great Day of Atonement, when the high-priest went into the Holy of Holies, bearing the blood of a goat, to make atonement for the sins of the people. This sacrifice was a type of Christ, the Son of God, who would one day die for the sins of the world.



NUMBERS.

WHEN the children of Israel had finished the tabernacle, and had heard all the laws of God, they went on their travels again, and before long they came to the border of the



Promised Land. Then Moses chose twelve men, one from each tribe, and sent them to spy out the land. They went through the whole country, from the south to the north, and when they came back they reported that the land was a goodly land, flowing with milk and honey. But though the land was so pleasant, it was full of strong-walled cities, and there were giants there, so big and strong that the

spies said they felt themselves to be like grasshoppers in their sight. Thus said ten of the spies; and although the other two, Joshua, whom we have heard of before as the

attendant of Moses, and Caleb, tried to cheer up the people, saying that God would help them, the people would not believe Caleb and Joshua: they wept and mourned, and said they wished they had died in the land of Egypt. God was displeased with their want of faith; he told Moses to tell them to go back and wander in the wilderness until all the grown people had died. Only Caleb and Joshua, he said, should live to enter Canaan, for they had spoken the thing that was right.

So they went back, and for thirty-eight years more they wandered up and down, led by the pillar of cloud and of fire, and fed with manna from heaven. When the pillar stopped they stopped, whether for one day or for many weeks or years, and when it went on they followed it.

At last they came to a place where there was no water, and again the people





murmured, as they had so often done before. Then the Lord told Moses and Aaron to gather all the people together before a great rock and speak to the rock, and the water would gush forth.

So Moses and Aaron gathered all the people together, before the rock, and they said, "Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock?" And Moses struck the rock twice with his rod, and the water poured out—enough for all that great multitude, and for their cattle too.

But God was not pleased with Moses and Aaron: for they had spoken as if it was by their own power that they were to make the rock flow with water, and Moses had struck the rock when God told him to speak to it. It was far worse for men who knew God so well, to sin, than for others, and so God told them that they should not live to lead the people into the Promised Land. And so, not long after, Aaron's time came to die, and God bade him go up into a certain mountain, with his eldest son Eleazar, and Moses. And when they were on the mountain, Moses took the high-priest's robes

off from Aaron and put them on Eleazar, and Aaron died there, and Eleazar became high-priest.

Again the people began to murmur. They said they were tired of the manna that God gave them, and they wished they were back in Egypt. God was displeased with this, and he sent fiery serpents, that bit the people, and many of them died.

Then they came to Moses and said they had sinned, and begged him to pray God to take the serpents away. Moses prayed for the people, and God told him to make a serpent of brass, just like the serpents which had bitten the people, and put it on a pole, and that whoever looked at it should live. And Moses did so, and whenever any one who had been bitten looked at the brazen serpent he became well again.

After years of wandering the Israelites came to the inhabited country near the river Jordan, and the kings of those countries came out against them with armies. But God helped the Israelites, and they conquered these enemies.

When they came to the country of Moab, the Moabites were afraid, and Balak, their king, sent for a famous false prophet, named Balaam, to curse the children of Israel. God told Balaam not to go; but Balak promised to do such great things for him, that he saddled his ass, and went.



While he was on the way an angel came and stood in the road. Balaam did not see the angel, but the ass saw him and turned aside out of the way twice, although Balaam beat her to make her go. Then the angel went and stood in a narrow part of the road where the ass could not turn aside, and the ass fell down on her knees, and Balaam beat her again.

Then the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she spoke, and asked Balaam why he beat her. Balaam answered, because she had mocked him three times in turning out of the way. But the ass asked him if she had not always served him well, and if it was likely that she was doing this only to mock him. When she had said this Balaam's eyes were opened and he saw the angel; and the angel told him that the Lord was displeased with him for going when he had forbidden it, and that if the ass had not turned aside those three times he would have slain Balaam. Then Balaam said that he would go back again; but the angel told him to go on, and be careful to speak only what God told him.

So Balaam came to Balak, and Balak took him to a high place where he could see the Israelites, and built seven altars and offered sacrifices on them, and bade Balak curse the Israelites; but Balaam only blessed them, for he dared not disobey God.

Balak was much displeased at this, and he took Balaam to another place, and then to a third, but in every place Balaam blessed the Israelites instead of cursing them. When Balak saw that Balaam would not do as he wished him to, he said that he had intended to promote him to great honor, but that he would not do it, since Balaam would not curse the Israelites. So Balaam went back to his own home, but although he had not dared to disobey God by cursing his chosen people, he did not obey him from the heart; and not long afterwards, when there was war between Israel and the Midianites, Balaam joined the Midianites and was killed fighting against the people of Israel.

In the course of their wanderings God had led them to the country east of the river Jordan, called the land of Gilead and Bashan, which was a land of fertile fields and broad meadows watered by running streams. The kings of that country had come out against Israel and had fought against them, but God had been with Israel and they had conquered, so that all this beautiful country had become theirs. Then the heads of the tribes of Reuben and Gad and Manasseh came and asked Moses if they might not have this country for theirs. They had much cattle, they said, and this was just the place for them.

At first Moses was not pleased with this plan, because he thought it was not fair for the men of these tribes to sit down at ease in the lands of Gilead and Bashan, while the others had to cross the river and fight for the land of Canaan. But the men of these tribes said that they did not wish to do so. They would only build cities for their wives and children and pens for their cattle, and then all the armed men would cross over Jordan into Canaan, when God bade them do so, and would fight with their brethren of the other tribes until they had subdued all their enemies. When Moses heard this he was satisfied and he bade them do as they wished to do.

DEUTERONOMY.

It was now forty years since the children of Israel had come up out of Egypt, and the time had come for Moses to die. So he gathered all the people together, and repeated all the laws that God had given them. And then he called Joshua, and



blessed him, and bade him be strong and of good courage, and lead the people of Israel into the Promised Land. Then Moses set forth alone on his last journey. He was one hundred and twenty years old, but God had preserved his strength. And so he climbed the steep hill of Pisgah, leaning on his staff, his heart lifted up in prayer to God. From the top of the mount he looked over the whole land of Palestine, and saw that goodly land, into which he had so longed to enter.

And then he laid him down to die. How he died, no one knows; but the Lord buried him, and Moses went into the presence of his God.



JOSHUA.

WHEN the children of Israel saw that Moses did not come back, and knew that he was indeed dead, they mourned for him for thirty days. But it was time for them to be going into the Promised Land, and so the word of the Lord came to Joshua, saying, "As I was with Moses so will I be with thee," and bidding him be strong and of good courage, and lead the children of Israel into Canaan.

Then Joshua called two men whom he knew to be brave and wise, and bade them go over Jordan and view the land. They went over, and came to the city of Jericho, and went into the house of a woman called Rahab to spend the night.

Soon the king of Jericho heard of their coming, and he sent to Rahab, telling her to give up the men, for he was sure that they had come to spy out the land. But Rahab took the two men up to the flat roof of her house, and hid them under some flax

which she had put up there to dry. And then she said to the king's messengers, that there had indeed come some men, but she did not know where they came from, and that they had gone away, she did not know where, and she advised the messengers to hasten after them. So the messengers went out of the city, and pursued after the two men, as they thought, as far as the river Jordan.



As soon as it was dark, Rahab came up to the roof and told the men that all the people of Jericho had heard how the Israelites had conquered the people on the other side of Jordan, and they were dreadfully afraid. And she said that she knew that the Israelites' God must be the true God, and that he would help them to conquer Jericho: and she begged them, when that time came, to remember her, and to save her and her father and mother and brothers and sisters, and their families. And the men promised to save them all, if she would not say a word about the matter to any one.

Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was built on the city wall. And she advised the men to hide in the mountains for three days until the pursuers were come back, and then to return to their camp.

When the men found themselves standing safely on the ground outside of the city wall, they told Rahab to bind the scarlet rope by which she had let them down fast to her window. And they told her that when the Israelites came into the country, she must gather all her friends into her house, and nothing should happen to them. Only



her friends must be careful to stay in the house, for they could not answer for anybody who was outside of that house.

The woman promised, and the men did as she had advised. The pursuers, after looking for them everywhere and not finding them, went back to the city; and then the two men returned to Joshua, and told him all that they had heard.

Joshua got up early the next morning, and he bade the people go down to the banks of the Jordan and pitch their tents there. And after three days he bade the people to sanctify themselves, for the Lord was going to do such a wonderful thing for them they could no longer doubt that he was among them, and was going to drive away all their enemies and give the land of Canaan to them, as he had promised to their forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Early the next morning Joshua told the priests whose duty it was to carry the Ark of the Covenant to take up the ark and go down into the river Jordan. And they did so; and as soon as their feet touched the water of the river, God caused the water to stop flowing down from above, so that there was dry land all the way across the river, and the people walked across on dry land, the priests standing in the middle of the river till



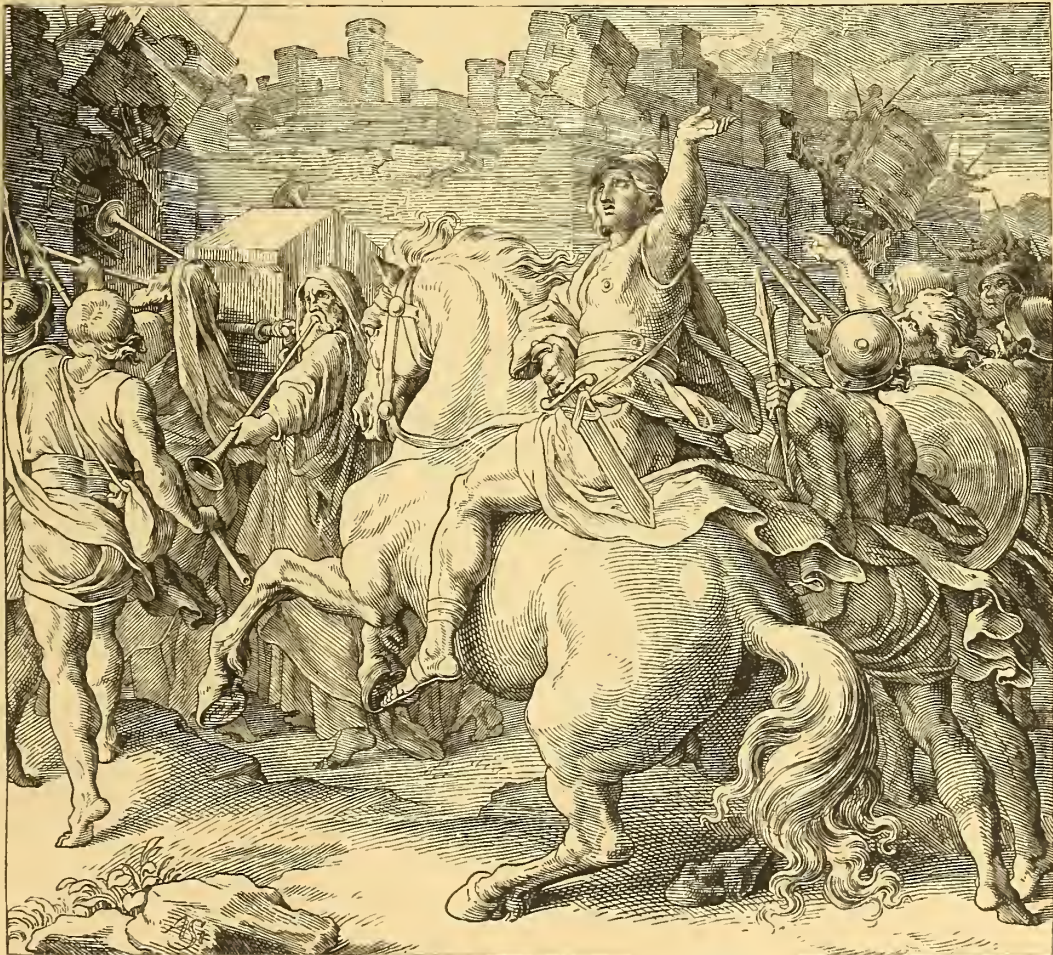
all the people had passed over. Joshua had bidden twelve men, one from each tribe, to take each a stone from the bed of the river and carry it over to the farther shore, and Joshua set up twelve stones in the bed of the river in the place where the priests' feet had rested. When all the people were passed over, the priests bearing the ark passed over, and as soon as they stepped up on the dry land the waters of the river came down and flowed along just as they had always done.

Then the twelve men piled up the stones which they had brought out of the river-

bed in a place called Gilgal, so that in days to come, when children saw them they would ask their fathers, "What mean these stones?" and their fathers could tell them how the children of Israel came over Jordan on dry land; that the meaning of that great event should never be lost.

Now when the people of Jericho saw the people crossing the river they were afraid, and they shut up all the gates of their city. But after a few days Joshua bade four of the priests take up the ark of the covenant and carry it, and he told seven other priests to take trumpets of rams' horns and go before it. So the whole army of the children of Israel marched around the city of Jericho, the priests blowing the trumpets, the armed men walking before the ark, and all the rest of the people following after, but no one speaking a word, for Joshua had said, "Ye shall not shout nor make any noise with your voice until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout."

When they had marched around the city once they went back to their tents.



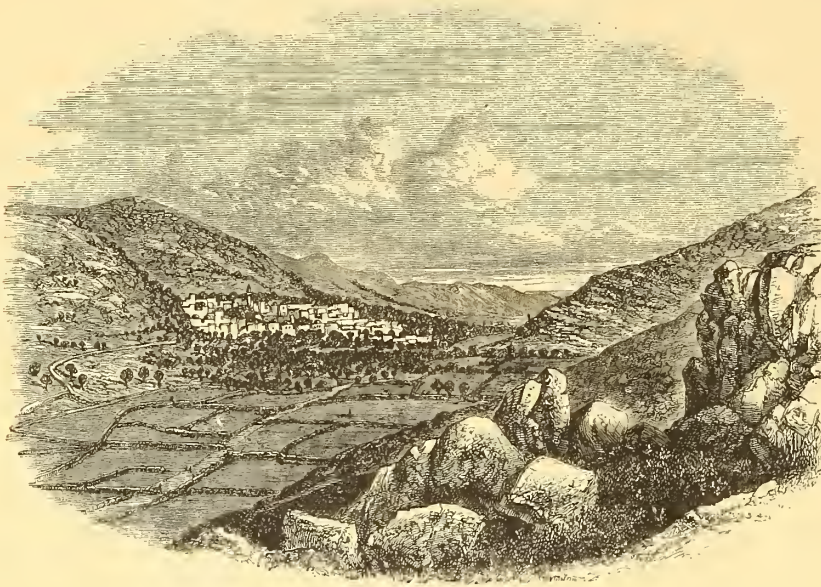
The next morning they all rose early, and the priests took up the ark again, and they all went around the city again in perfect silence, only that the seven priests blew the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark; and thus they did for six days.

On the seventh day they rose as soon as the morning began to dawn, and they marched about the city seven times. And at the seventh time, when the priests blew their trumpets, Joshua said, "Shout! for the Lord hath given you the city!"

Oh, what a shout went up from the throats of those hundreds of thousands of men! And the walls of Jericho fell flat, and every man turned and went up straight before him into the city. And they killed all the people and burned the city with fire. But the two men who had been spies ran to Rahab's house and brought her out, and her father and mother and all her friends, and took them to a safe place.

After that the Israelites went on conquering through the land until they came to the plain of Shechem, where Jacob had lived. Here they buried Joseph, for he had asked that his body might be carried back to Canaan and buried, whenever the children of Israel went back there; and all through their forty years of wandering they had carried with them the coffin containing Joseph's bones.

On both sides of the plain of Shechem are hills. The name of one is Mount Ebal, and the name of the other is Mount Gerizim. So now Joshua built an altar on Mount Ebal and offered a sacrifice, and then half the people gathered together on one mountain and half on the other, and Joshua read all the words of the law and the blessings, for obedience and the woes for disobedience, and all the people said, "Amen."



Now the people of a city called Gibeon wanted to make peace with the Israelites. They knew that God had told the Israelites to kill all the inhabitants of Canaan because of their great wickedness, and so they resolved to deceive the Israelites. They dressed themselves in old and ragged clothes, and put old, patched sandals on their feet, and took dry and mouldy bread in their wallets, and came to Joshua and said that they had come from a very far country, because they had heard of Israel's God and wanted to



serve him. And they said that when they left home their clothes were new and their bread fresh out of the oven, but they had been so long on the way that their clothes were worn out, and their bread dry and mouldy. And Joshua believed what they said, and he forgot to ask of God, and he gave them a solemn promise that they should live.

But very soon he found out how he had been tricked; for the Gibeonites lived close by, in the very heart of the country. However, as he had promised, Joshua did not kill them, but he made them and their children to be servants to the Israelites as long as they should live.

The other Canaanites heard of the league that the people of Gibeon had made with Israel, and the kings of five cities went up to fight against Gibeon. The Gibeonites



sent to Joshua for help, and Joshua called together his army, and they marched all night and reached Gibeon in the morning. Then came one of the fiercest battles that was ever fought. The Lord fought for Joshua, and sent a fearful hailstorm, so that more Canaanites were killed with hailstones than were slain with the sword. And as they were in the heat of battle Joshua said, "Sun, stand thou still upon

Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon," for he did not want night to come until the battle was over. And it did not, for before the day was done Joshua had beaten the Canaanites, and chased them a long way, and killed very many of them, and had taken the five kings and put them to death.

After this there was another battle up in the northern part of Palestine, where Joshua conquered another league of kings. And after that, although there were still many small towns yet to be conquered, yet the land was quiet enough, and the Israelites were strong enough to divide up the country among the tribes. So Joshua called all the heads or princes of the twelve tribes together and divided the land between them by lot. And afterwards they went to a place called Shiloh and set up the tabernacle, and for many years the tabernacle and the ark of the covenant and the sacrifices were at Shiloh.

By this time Joshua was very old, and he gathered all the Israelites together at Shechem, and told them all the story of what God had done for them, and asked them to choose that day whom they would serve—whether the Lord God or the gods of the Canaanites. And all the people said, "The Lord our God will we serve and his voice will we obey." So Joshua died, being a hundred and ten years old.

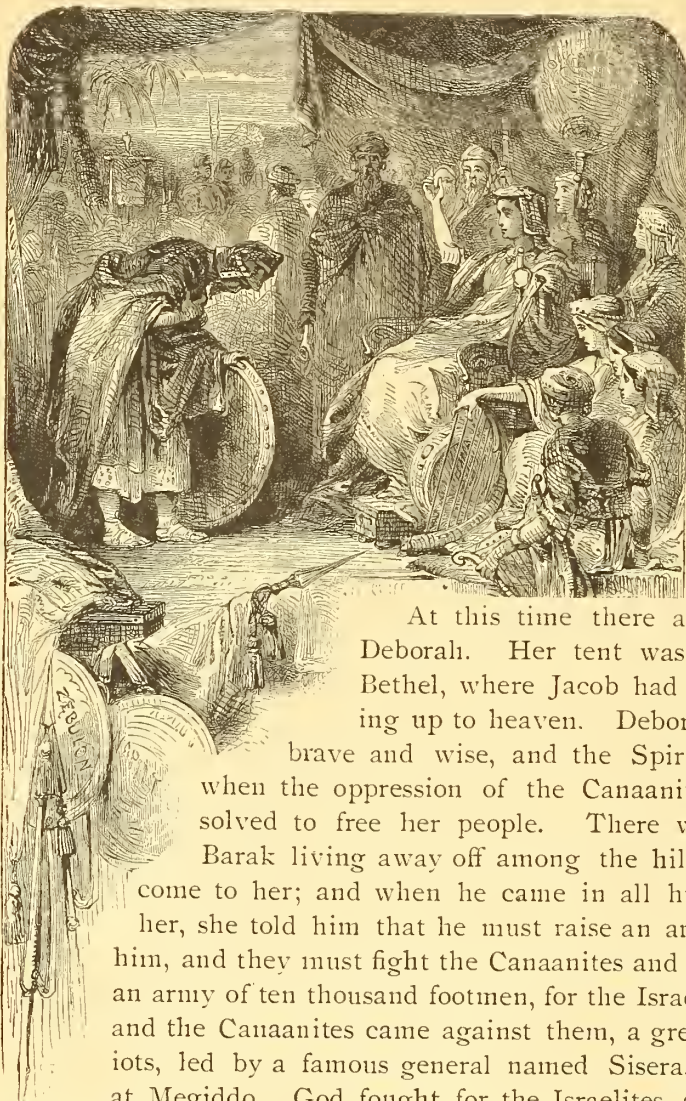


JUDGES.

AFTER the death of Joshua the Israelites went on settling themselves in their new home. There was no great prophet to speak to them in the name of God as Moses had done, and they often forgot God and sinned against him. When they did so God punished them by letting the Canaanites get the better of them; but when they repented

of their sins and cried unto the Lord, he always raised up a deliverer for them. These deliverers were called Judges, and in the course of three hundred years after Joshua died there were a great many judges.

At one time, when the Israelites had sinned, the Canaanites got so much power over them that they lived in constant terror. They dared not even walk in the high-ways, but crept about in hidden paths, for the Canaanites had taken away all their weapons, and there was not a spear or a shield among the Israelites.



At this time there arose a famous prophetess named Deborah. Her tent was pitched under a palm-tree near Bethel, where Jacob had long ago seen the ladder reaching up to heaven. Deborah was a wonderful woman, very

brave and wise, and the Spirit of God was upon her. And when the oppression of the Canaanites became so great Deborah resolved to free her people. There was a very brave warrior named Barak living away off among the hills, and Deborah sent for him to come to her; and when he came in all his armor and bowed down before her, she told him that he must raise an army, and that she would go with him, and they must fight the Canaanites and free themselves. So Barak raised an army of ten thousand footmen, for the Israelites had no horses in those days; and the Canaanites came against them, a great host, with horsemen and chariots, led by a famous general named Sisera. And there was a great battle at Megiddo. God fought for the Israelites, as he had often done before, and sent a fearful storm, that swelled the streams and turned the ground into a bog, and the horsemen and chariots sank in the mire. But the mire did not trouble the Israelitish

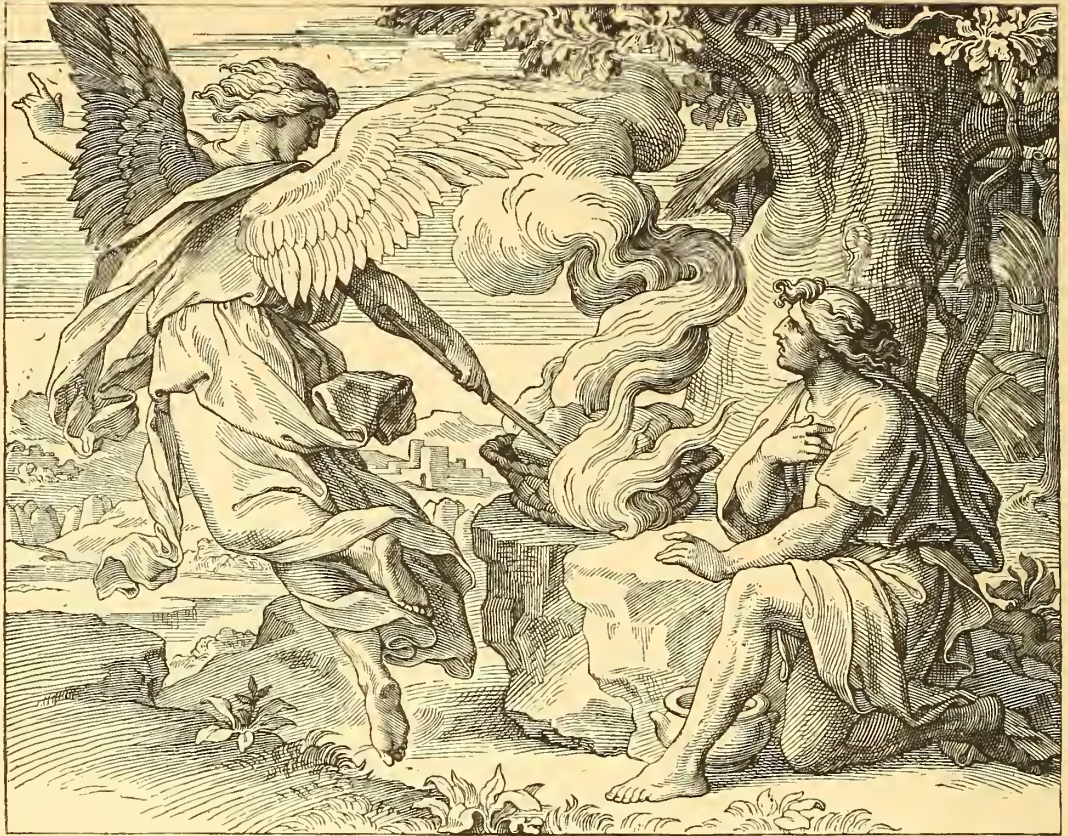
foot soldiers, and they overcame the Canaanites and chased them a long way. Sisera, their captain, leaped from his chariot and fled away on foot, and at last he took refuge in a tent far up in the hills. Here lived a man named Heber, a Kenite. When Sisera drew near, Jael, the wife of Heber, came out to meet him, and invited him to come in and rest; and while he was asleep Jael took a pin of the tent and a hammer, and drove the tent-pin through his temples and killed him. And Sisera's mother, who was watching from the lattice of her window for her son to come back in triumph loaded with rich spoil, looked long in vain, for her son lay dead in that far-off tent among the hills.

Then Deborah sang a song of triumph, as Miriam had done at the Red Sea. And well she might, for the Lord had greatly helped his people on that day. The power of the Canaanites was broken by this battle, and they never troubled Israel any more.



But even this great deliverance was not enough to make the Israelites true to their God. They forgot him again, and then God sent against them the Midianites, who were a very rich and strong people, living near the Arabian Gulf. They oppressed the Israelites in every possible way. They would come at harvest time, just when the Israelites were about to gather in the fruits of their labor, and would carry away all the corn and other food, and would drive away their cattle. It was of little use to till the ground for their enemies to reap, and so the fields were left to lie waste and the people suffered from hunger. And because of other cruelties of the Midianites many of the people left their homes and lived in dens and caves of the earth. But when they cried to the Lord he sent a prophet to remind them of the great things that he had done for Israel in delivering them from their enemies, and to tell them that they should have deliverance from these enemies also.

There was a good man named Gideon, living about fifteen miles north of Jerusalem at this time; and one day as he was threshing corn in a secret place for fear of the Midianites, an angel came to him saying, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor," and told him that he was to deliver Israel from the Midianites. This seemed impossible to Gideon, for he was a poor man and unknown in Israel, and he did not see how he was going to deliver his countrymen from such powerful oppressors. Gideon did not know that it was an angel, for it looked like a man, and he answered, "Oh, my lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?" But he asked the angel to stop until he brought him some food, and when he had laid the food before him on a rock, the angel touched it with his staff



and flames burst out and consumed it, and the angel vanished out of his sight. Then Gideon knew that God had truly sent word to him to deliver Israel.

So he raised a great army and pitched his camp opposite the host of Midian. But the Lord told Gideon that he had too large an army, for it was not best that Israel should have any reason for thinking that their own strength had saved them. So Gideon permitted all who were afraid to go back to their homes.

Still there were too many, and God chose three hundred men and told Gideon that all the others might go home.

When night came Gideon divided his three hundred men into three companies, and he gave to each man a trumpet and an empty pitcher, and told them to light their lamps and put them inside of the pitchers and to look at him and do as he did. So the three companies crept softly up on different sides of the host of Midian. The Midianites were sleeping quietly, with only the watchmen keeping guard, when at midnight they heard a fearful noise. For all Gideon's men blew their trumpets, and broke their pitchers with a loud crash, and cried "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" And their lamps flashed out in the darkness, and the Midianites were so terrified, that they all began to cut down their fellow-soldiers, not knowing what

they were doing. Then the whole army ran away, and Gideon's men after them, and the other Israelites gathered together at the fords of the river Jordan, and when the Midianites came there, to cross over and get away to their own country, they were all cut to pieces.

Again the children of Israel sinned, and served the gods of the heathen. Then



the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines, who were a strong people living on the sea-shore, and into the hands of the Ammonites, a wild tribe on the eastern border.

Then Israel cried unto the Lord and confessed their sins, and they put away their idols, and worshipped God. But a great army of Ammonites came up against them.

There was at this time a man named Jephthah living among the mountains of Gilead. He was a bold and strong man, wild and fierce, but full of zeal, and a mighty

warrior. So the people of Israel sent up into the mountains for Jephthah to come and be their captain. Brave as Jephthah was, he did not very well understand the God whom he served; and so he vowed that if God would give him the victory over Ammon, he would offer as a sacrifice whatever first came out of his door to welcome him home. Then he went into battle, and the Ammonites were subdued.

And when Jephthah went home in triumph the first thing he saw was his only daughter, coming out of his house to meet him with timbrels and dances, rejoicing in her dear father's triumph. But Jephthah rent his clothes and said, "Alas, my



daughter, thou hast brought me very low; for I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot go back."

When the young girl heard this, she made a noble and beautiful answer.

"My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies." She thought, as her father did, that God would be pleased to have her slain, and she was willing to offer up her life that her father might keep his word, and as a thank-offering for the salvation of her country.

Yet again the children of Israel sinned against God, and he delivered them into the hands of the Philistines, and they served them for forty years. But an angel had come to a man named Manoah and his wife, and had told them that they should have a child who would begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines. Shortly after they had a son whom they named Samson, which means the Sunny, and indeed he was always a sunny-hearted man, fond of a joke, although his life was full of storms and troubles.

While he was very young the Spirit of the Lord began to move in him, and he soon showed a wonderful strength. For one day a young lion rushed roaring upon



him: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he caught the lion and tore him in pieces, although he had no weapon in his hand.

One time he went and caught three hundred foxes, and tied firebrands to their tails, and let them loose in the cornfields of the Philistines, and burned up all the Philistines' corn. Then the Philistines chased after Samson with a great army; and the men of Judah were afraid, and they delivered Samson up to the Philistines.

The Philistines shouted for joy when they saw Samson, but their joy was short,



for he picked up the jawbone of an ass that lay there, and rushed upon the Philistines, all unarmed as he was, except with the jawbone of an ass, and killed a thousand men.

After that, one day Samson went to one of the chief cities of the Philistines, called Gaza, for he was not in the least afraid of the Philistines. And when it was known

that Samson was in the city, the Philistines laid wait at the gate of the city, saying, "In the morning, when it is day, we will kill him."

But in the middle of the night Samson got up and went out to the city gate. It was fast shut, and the men who were lying in wait for him were sound asleep. Then



Samson lifted the doors of the gate off their hinges, and carried them away off to the top of a hill. How surprised the Philistines were when they awoke! And Samson was probably much amused at having outwitted them.

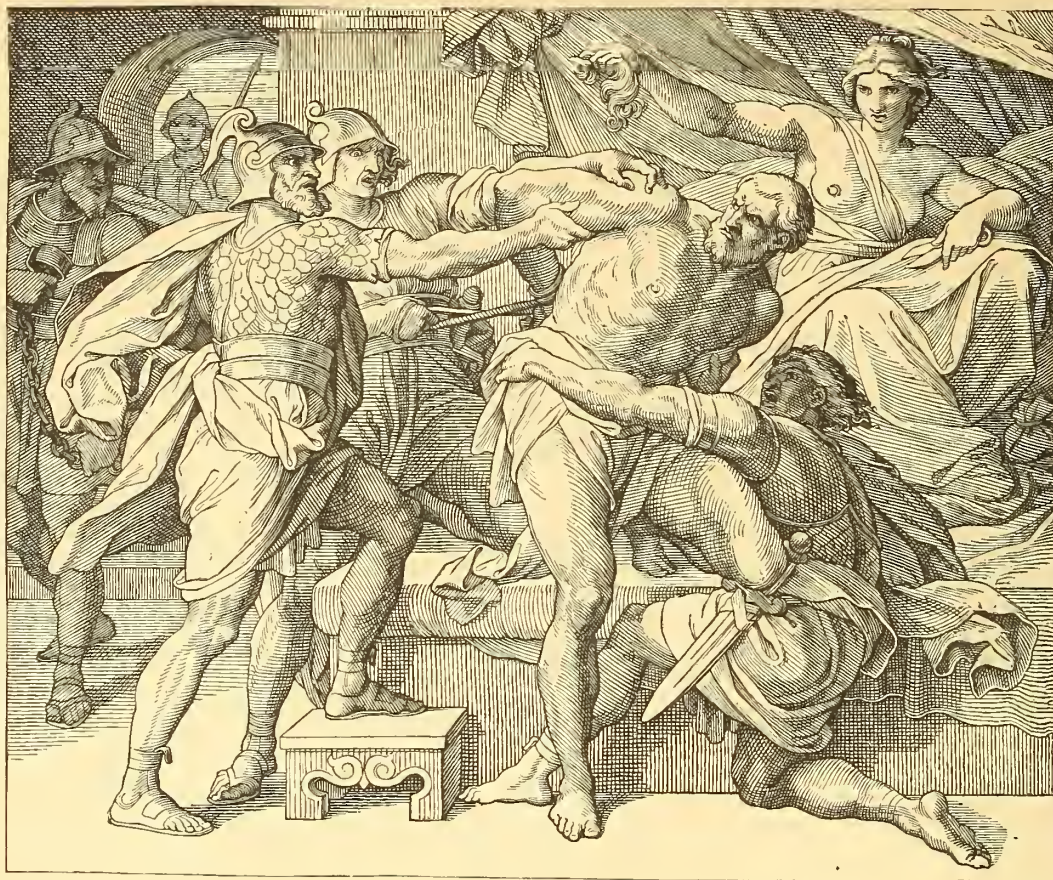
After that Samson loved a woman named Delilah, and the lords of the Philistines came to her and promised to give her a great sum of money if she would entice Samson to tell her the secret of his great strength. And Delilah begged Samson to tell her wherein his strength lay. Samson was amused at this, and thought it would be a good opportunity to play a trick on the Philistines. So he told her that if any one should bind him with

seven green withs that had never been dried, he would be weak, like any other man. Now Delilah had hidden some of the Philistines in her room. So she bound Samson with seven green withs, and then she said, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!" And he broke the withs like tow; and the Philistines dared not touch him, nor did they find out where his strength came from.

But Delilah begged Samson not to mock her that way, but to tell her truly what there was that would be strong enough to bind him. So he said, "If they bind me fast with new ropes, then I shall be weak, like another man." And Delilah had him bound with new ropes, and she said, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson." And he broke the ropes as if they had been a thread.

Then Delilah said, "You are mocking me: do tell me truly how you might be bound." So he said, "If you weave the seven locks of my hair into the web of cloth that is in the loom." Samson's hair was very long and thick, for it had never been cut since he was born. His parents had dedicated him to God as a Nazarite, and the Nazarites never drank wine or strong drink, and never had their hair cut. So Delilah wove Samson's hair into the web which was on her loom, and she said, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!" Then he got up and walked away carrying the web and the bar of the loom, hanging to his hair.

Then Delilah seemed very unhappy because Samson would not tell her the truth. Samson loved Delilah very much, and he could not bear to see her unhappy, and so at last he told her that if his hair should be shaved off he would lose his strength. And



she saw that he was telling the truth, and she sent for the lords of the Philistines to come back, and when he was asleep she had his hair shaved off: and then she said, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!" So he awoke, but he did not at first know that his strength was gone. Then the Philistines rushed upon him, and put out his eyes, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Gaza, and made him grind in the prison house.

However, his hair began to grow again. Then one day the Philistines were gathered together in the temple of their god, Dagon, and were praising their god; and they sent for Samson to come and make sport for them. When he was led in they placed him between two of the pillars of the temple. Now the temple was full of the lords and ladies of the Philistines; and Samson prayed to God to strengthen him again only that once, and God heard him and gave him back his strength. Then Samson put his arms around the two pillars of the temple, and bowed himself with all his might; and the pillars broke, and the house fell and crushed all the people. So the dead which Samson slew at his death were more than those whom he slew in his life.



left without husband or son. Then she felt that she must go back to Bethlehem in the land of Judah, her old home, for her heart yearned after her own people. So she set out to go to Bethlehem, and her two young daughters-in-law started with her.

But when they had gone a part of the way, Naomi bade her daughters-in-law good-by, and told them to go back to their fathers' houses: and she blessed them, for they had been good wives to her sons, and kind daughters to her.

Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law and turned back: but Ruth would not go, for she said that her mother-in-law's home and her God, should be hers.

So they went on until they came to Bethlehem. The people came out to meet them, much surprised and pleased to see Naomi at home. But when they called her by name, Naomi said, "Call me not Naomi," which means *pleasant*, "call me Mara," which means *bitter*; "for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me."

It was the beginning of the barley-harvest when Naomi and Ruth reached

RUTH.

Now in those days there was a famine in the land. And a man named Elimelech went over the Jordan to Moab to find food. He took with him his wife Naomi, and his two little sons. They liked the country of Moab, and so they remained there after the famine was over.

Before long Elimelech died, and Naomi's two sons grew up and took wives from among the Moabitish women. The name of one of the wives was Orpah, which means "a fawn," and the name of the other was Ruth, or "the rose." But by and by both the sons died, and poor Naomi was



Bethlehem, and, as they had no money, Ruth went to glean in the fields after the reapers, to get food.

Now Naomi had a kinsman, named Boaz, and he was a very rich man, and an elder or prince of the tribe of Judah. And when Ruth went out to glean it was to the fields of Boaz that she went, not knowing that he was a kinsman.

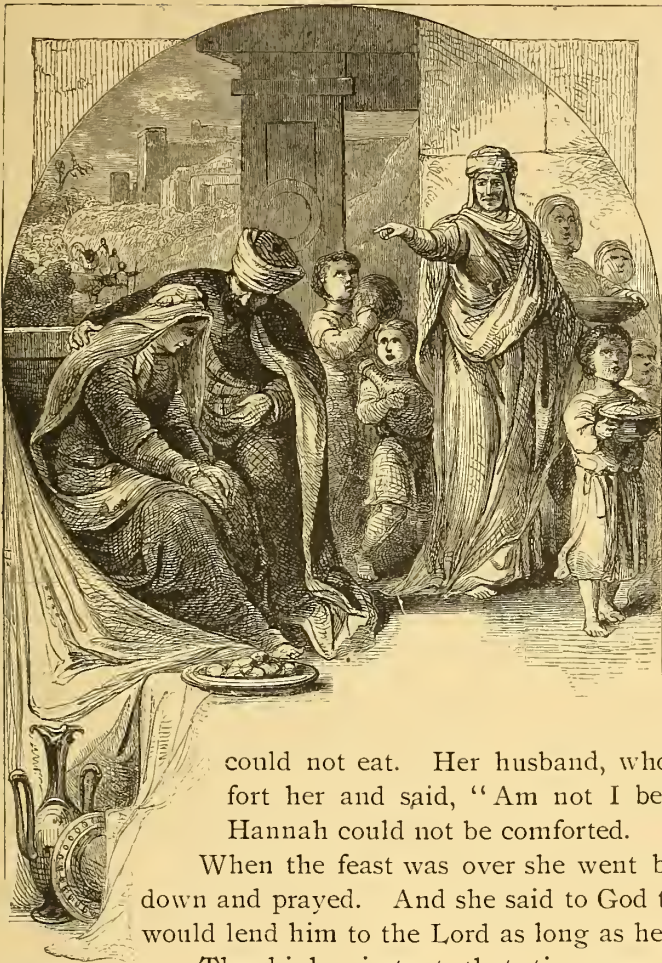


After a time Boaz came out and saluted his reapers, and asked who the young woman was who was gleaning. They told him, and Boaz spoke kindly to Ruth and told her not to go anywhere else to glean, but to keep with his maidens, and at noon to come and eat with them. And he told the reapers to let fall some handfuls of grain purposely, that she might gather them; for he had heard of her goodness to her mother-in-law. So Ruth gleaned in the fields of Boaz all through the barley-harvest and the wheat-harvest, and brought home what she gleaned.

Now according to the law of Moses, if a man died without children, his nearest kinsman ought to marry his wife. So Naomi told Ruth that she should go down to the threshing-floor of Boaz, and speak to him when he was alone, and remind him that he was a near kinsman.

Ruth did as her mother-in-law bade, and she behaved so modestly and sweetly that the heart of Boaz was touched. And the next day Boaz went to the gate of the city and said to the elders and to all the people, that he would take Ruth the Moabitess for his wife. And the people said, "We are witnesses," and asked God to bless Boaz and his house.

Then Boaz took Ruth for his wife, and after a while she had a little son, called Obed. This babe grew up and became the father of Jesse, who was the father of David, the king, and the ancestor of our Lord Jesus Christ.



I. SAMUEL.

IN the days of the later judges there was a man named Elkanah who had two wives, named Peninnah and Hannah; and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. And Peninnah used to taunt Hannah and jeer at her because she had no children, for children were considered a great honor, and a reward from God.

Now they used to go up every year to Shiloh, to the yearly sacrifice, and after the sacrifice had been offered, to make a great feast.

One day, when they were feasting thus in Shiloh, Hannah was made so unhappy by Peninnah's words that she

could not eat. Her husband, who loved her tenderly, tried to comfort her and said, "Am not I better to thee than ten sons?" But Hannah could not be comforted.

When the feast was over she went back to the tabernacle and kneeled down and prayed. And she said to God that if he would give her a son she would lend him to the Lord as long as he lived.

The high-priest at that time was named Eli; and he saw Hannah moving her lips, but not speaking aloud, and he thought she had been drinking too much at the feast. So he spoke harshly to her. But Hannah said, "No, my lord. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my heart to the Lord."

Then Eli said, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition."

So Hannah was comforted, and she went home with her husband and his family, and God did grant her petition, for he sent her a little son. And Hannah called his name Samuel, which means "Asked of God." And she sang a beautiful hymn of praise to God, in which there was also a prophecy of the Saviour, Jesus Christ.

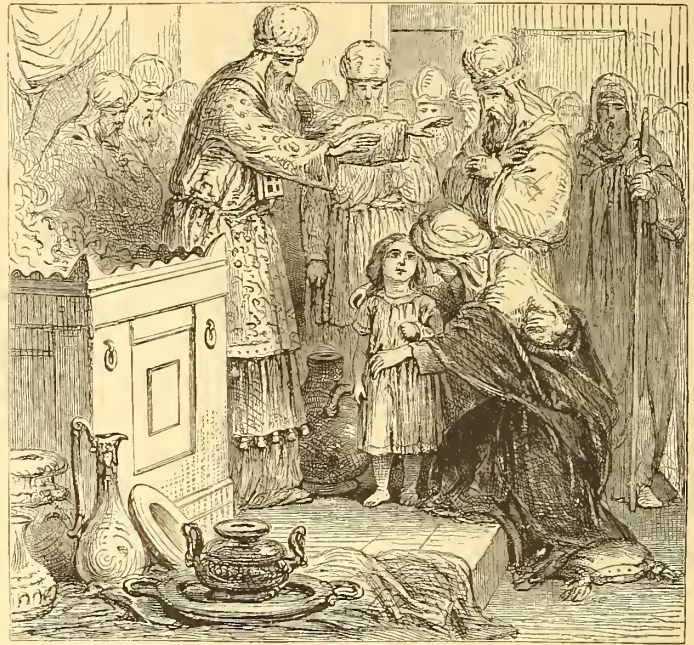
Hannah did not go up to the feast again until Samuel was old enough to go. But when Samuel was several years old Hannah took him up to Shiloh, to Eli, the high-priest. And Hannah said, "I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying to the Lord. For this child I prayed, and the Lord has given me my petition. Therefore as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord."

So the little Samuel remained with Eli when his father and mother went back to their house. But every year his mother came to see him, and brought him a little coat that she had made for him. And God gave her other children; but little Samuel ministered to the Lord in the tabernacle at Shiloh.

Now Eli, the high-priest, had two sons, who were priests, and they were very wicked men. For though Eli was a good old man and loved God, he did not make his sons do right, and they went on from bad to worse.

But little Samuel was a comfort to the old high-priest. He waited upon him, and did everything that Eli told him to do. He slept in a room beside the Holy Place, and Samuel slept in a little room near Eli's room.

One night while Samuel was sleeping in his little bed he heard a voice calling, "Samuel, Samuel!" He thought Eli was calling him, and he jumped up and ran to Eli's room, saying, "Here am I, for thou didst call me." But Eli said, "I called not; lie down again." This was done again and a third time. It was the Lord who was calling Samuel, and at last Eli told him that if he heard



the voice again he must say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." He did so, and God told him that he was going to punish Eli's sons very dreadfully for their sins.

After that the Lord spoke often to Samuel, and every one knew that Samuel was a prophet of the Lord. But the people continued to sin against God, and he let the Philistines defeat them in battle. So they resolved to send for the ark of the covenant to go with them to the battle. This displeased God, and the Philistines got the victory, and killed a great many Israelites, and they killed Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, and carried the ark of God away. And when Eli heard that his sons were killed and the ark of God taken, he fell backward off his seat and died.

The ark was with the Philistines seven months, but God sent such plagues upon the Philistines that they finally sent it back to Israel.

Samuel judged Israel until he was an old man, and the Philistines were subdued as long as he judged Israel. But when he grew old the people came to him and asked him to make them a king, and God told him to do as they asked him.



Now there was a young man of the tribe of Benjamin named Saul. And one day he came to Samuel to inquire about his father's asses that had strayed away. Samuel told Saul that the asses were found, and he walked along with him a little way on

the road home. Presently he asked Saul to bid his servant go on before; and then he took a horn of oil and anointed Saul, and told him that he should be king of Israel. Saul was a fine man, tall and handsome, and very brave: when the people knew that he was to be their king they were pleased. For a time Saul made a good king, but it soon became plain that he was not a true servant of God. Samuel mourned over Saul's wickedness, but God told him that he had chosen another man to be king in place



of Saul, and that he must go to Bethlehem and anoint him. Then Saul went to Bethlehem to the house of Jesse, who was the grandson of Boaz and Ruth. Jesse had a large family of sons, and each one was brought to Samuel in turn, but none was the man chosen by God. At last there was only one more, and he was but a lad and took care of the sheep. Samuel sent for him, and when he came in the Lord said to Samuel, "Arise and anoint him, for this is he." And Samuel poured the oil on David's head, and anointed him.

But David was not to be king at once. For the present he was to go back to his sheep. And he used to think much of God while he was watching his flocks, and he wrote many beautiful psalms, and sang them to his harp.

As for Saul, he became very moody and unhappy, and at times he seemed to be almost insane. Then his servants thought best to find some one who could play well on the harp, that when Saul's gloomy fits came upon him, he might be soothed by the sweet music. And they heard that David could play well on the harp, and they sent for him. Then Jesse, David's father, loaded an ass with presents for the king, and sent them by David to Saul. When Saul saw David he loved him, and whenever the evil mood came upon Saul David played the harp and the evil spirit passed away.



Now the Philistines came up again to battle against Israel, and Saul gathered an army and went out to meet the Philistines, and the two armies pitched their camps in sight of one another. And there was a great giant in the army of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath; he was ten feet high, and he wore a full suit of brass armor; he had a staff as heavy as a weaver's beam, and a heavy iron spear, and a man bearing a shield went before him.



This giant came out before the army of Israel every day and challenged them to send out a man to fight him, saying that if he was defeated all the Philistines would serve the Israelites, and if the Israelitish champion was defeated, Israel should serve the Philistines. But there was no man in Israel who dared take up the challenge, and this went on for forty days, the two armies facing one another without striking a blow.

Now David had gone back to Bethlehem to his father's sheep, but his three elder brothers were with the army, and one day his father told him to go and bring word how his brothers were getting on. And David went, and while he was talking with his brothers the giant came out and made his usual challenge, and David heard him.

Then David asked, "What shall be done to the man who kills this Philistine?"



They told David that the man who should kill Goliath would be made rich, and would have the king's daughter for his wife.

Then David went down to the brook and chose some smooth stones, and put them in his wallet, and took his staff and the sling he used for throwing stones, and went out against the Philistine.

When Goliath saw this young, unarmed man he sneered at him; but David said, "I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied." Then the Philistine came towards David, and David put one of his stones in his sling, and ran and slung it, and the stone struck Goliath on the forehead, and he fell to the earth. Then David ran and stood upon him, and pulled out his sword and cut off his head. And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead they ran away, and the Israelites ran after them and killed a great many of them. After that Saul would not let David go home any more, but kept him with him, and when Jonathan Saul's son saw David he loved him as his own soul, and David loved Jonathan, and they became dear friends. Jonathan gave David his robe and his sword and his bow and his girdle, as token of his love. And Saul set David over the men of war, and David led the soldiers out to fight whenever he thought best, for he was a wise captain.



But the whole country rang with David's great deed, and one day, when he was coming back with his army from some raid on the Philistines, the women went out to meet him, and they sang, "Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thou-



sands." Saul heard it, and his love turned to jealousy, and he tried to have David killed. He dared not do so openly, David was such a favorite with the people, but he sent David on the most dangerous expeditions, hoping that he would be killed. But God protected David.

Jonathan saw how his father felt towards David, and he talked kindly of him to his father, and again and again brought back his father's old love for David: but the jealous feeling would always return in a little while.

One day, when Saul's evil mood was upon him, David took his harp and played as he had so often done. Now there was a javelin in Saul's hand, and in a fit of sudden hate Saul let fly the javelin towards David. But David moved quickly aside, and the javelin stuck in the wall.

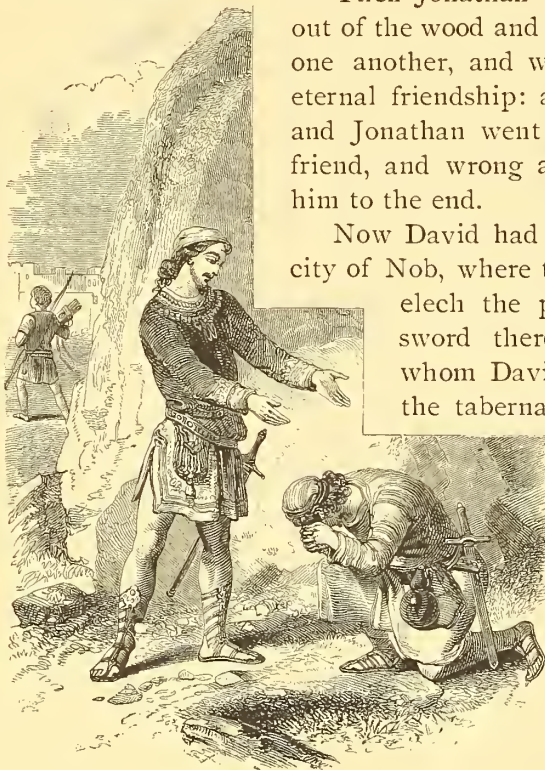
At last David was obliged to go away and hide. And Jonathan came to him in the wood where he was hiding and told him that he would try to make his father feel kindly again. So they agreed together that Jonathan should give David a sign as to how his father felt—a sign that David would understand, but no one else.

Jonathan talked with his father, but this time he could not arouse his old kindness towards David. And so the next morning he went out to give David the sign he had agreed upon. He took his bow and arrows, as if he were going to practise a little, and he took a lad with him to pick up his arrows. He went to the field on the edge of the wood where David was hiding, and began to shoot, and the lad ran after the arrows. And as he was running Jonathan shot an arrow beyond him, and David knew that this was a sign that he was to go further away, for Saul was bent on having him killed.

Then Jonathan sent the lad back to town, and David came out of the wood and bowed down before Jonathan, and they kissed one another, and wept very much. And they made a vow of eternal friendship: and then David went away to hide himself, and Jonathan went back to the city. Dearly as he loved his friend, and wrong as his father was, he would be a good son to him to the end.

Now David had no weapon with him, and he went to the city of Nob, where the tabernacle then was, and he asked Ahimelech the priest to give him a sword. There was no sword there except the sword of the giant Goliath, whom David had slain, for that had been laid away in the tabernacle as a trophy. And David said, "There

is none like that: give it me." So Ahimelech gave it to him, and David went away. But it so happened that Saul's steward, Doeg, was there and saw Ahimelech give the sword to David; and he went and told Saul, and Saul went down to Nob, and killed Ahimelech and all the other priests there, and their wives and their children, and burned the city with fire. To such awful sin his jealousy of



David led this unhappy king. But Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, escaped from Nob, and fled to David, and remained with him through all the troubled years that followed, and when at last David became king, Abiathar became high-priest.

This was the beginning of a hard and dangerous life for David, which lasted for several years. He was obliged to hide, now here, now there: sometimes in some friendly city, but more often in some cave in the hills. But his father and mother and his brethren and relatives came to him, and little by little other men came and joined him, until he had six hundred men with him. They lived in the mountains, and Saul chased after them from place to place; but David and his men learned to know all the passes of the mountains, and every den and cave, and Saul never caught them.

One time when Saul was pursuing after David, he went into a cave for a little rest, not knowing that David and his men were in that very cave. And David's men said to him, "Now is your time: the Lord has delivered your enemy into your hand."

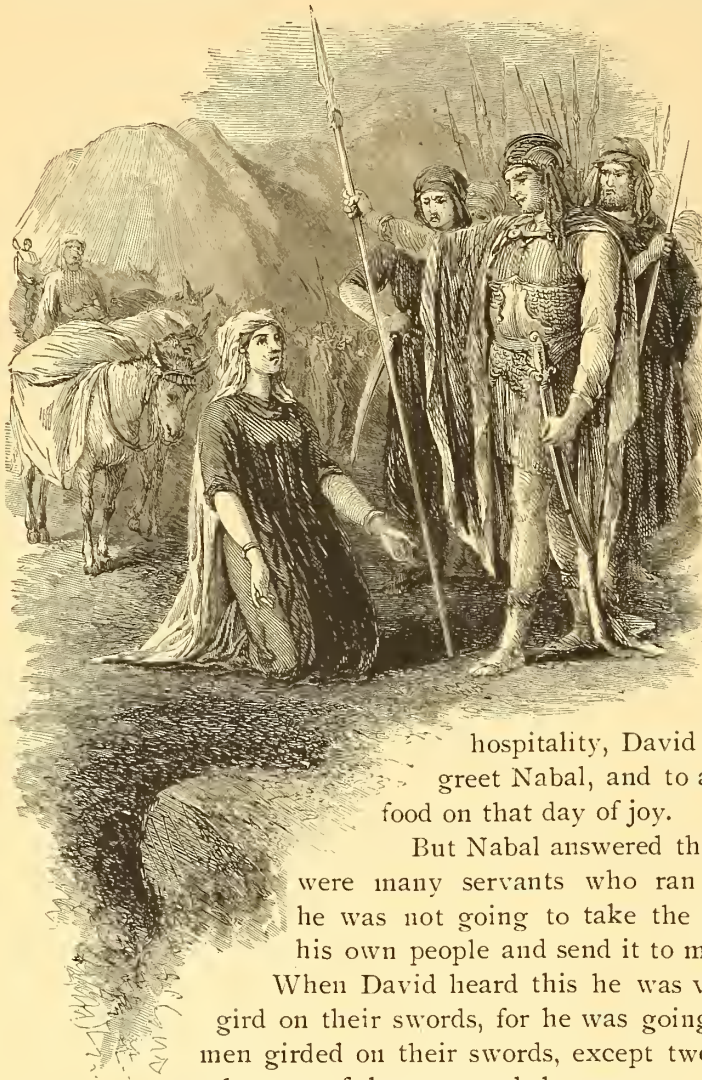


Then David stole gently up to Saul and cut off the skirt of his robe, but he did not touch Saul, and Saul woke and went away without knowing that David had been so near. Soon after David came out and called after him, saying, "My lord, the king!" And when Saul looked back, David bowed down to the ground.

And he said, "Why do you believe people who say that I would do you any harm? Behold this very day the Lord delivered you into my hand, but I did not touch you, because you are the Lord's anointed. But see, here is the skirt of your robe that I cut off. It is a sign that I do not want to hurt you, for I did nothing to harm you when you were in my power."

When Saul heard him he said, "Is this thy voice, my son David?" And Saul wept, and said that David was more righteous than he. And he told David that he

knew that he would be king after him, and he asked David to be kind to his children when he was dead. And David promised. Then Saul went home for a time, but David could not trust Saul to be true to him, and he remained in the mountains with his friends, waiting until God's time should come to make him king.



Not long after this Samuel died, and all the people mourned for him, and buried him in his own city of Ramah.

Now there was in one of the towns near the hills where David was hiding a man whose name was Nabal. He was very rich, and had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats; and they were scattered about on the mountains for pasture. And David and his men protected them from thieves and robbers, for there were very many such in those unsettled days. When sheep-shearing time came, which is always a time of merry-making and

hospitality, David sent some of his young men to greet Nabal, and to ask if he would send them some food on that day of joy.

But Nabal answered the men roughly, saying that there were many servants who ran away from their masters, and he was not going to take the good food he had prepared for his own people and send it to men that he knew nothing about.

When David heard this he was very angry, and told his men to gird on their swords, for he was going to punish Nabal. And all his men girded on their swords, except two hundred who were to stay and take care of the tents and the women.

Now one of Nabal's shepherds went to Abigail, Nabal's wife, and told her the whole story, and that David and his men had been like a wall to them, they took such good care of them. He asked her to do something about it, for their master was so ill-tempered that they dared not speak to him, and he feared that David would punish Nabal.

Abigail was a very wise young woman. She saw the danger, and while Nabal

was holding a drunken feast she loaded some asses with provisions and sent her servants forward with them, and she herself followed. As they were going, they met David and his armed men.

Then Abigail got down from her ass, and bowed down to the ground, and asked



David to forgive the folly of Nabal, and accept the present which she had brought. She told him that she had not seen the young men when they came from David, or she would not have allowed such a message to be sent to him, for she knew that David and his men had guarded Nabal's property from robbers, and that in all justice Nabal owed David far more than he asked for. Then Abigail spoke of David's troubles with Saul, saying that she knew that Saul was trying to kill him, but that she felt sure that David's soul was bound up in the Lord's bundle of life. By this she meant that God would surely take care of David

and not let Saul slay him. Abigail had perhaps heard how Samuel had anointed David to be king over Israel, and she knew that no man can hinder what God has purposed. She said that she knew that David was fighting the Lord's battles, and that the Lord would make him prevail in the end. And she reminded him that when that time came he would not be sorry that he had not avenged himself on Nabal.

Then David thanked Abigail for her advice, and for her present, and bade her go in peace.

When Abigail reached home Nabal was feasting royally, and Abigail said nothing to him, but the next morning she told him all that had happened; and he was afraid and his heart died within him, and about ten days after he died.

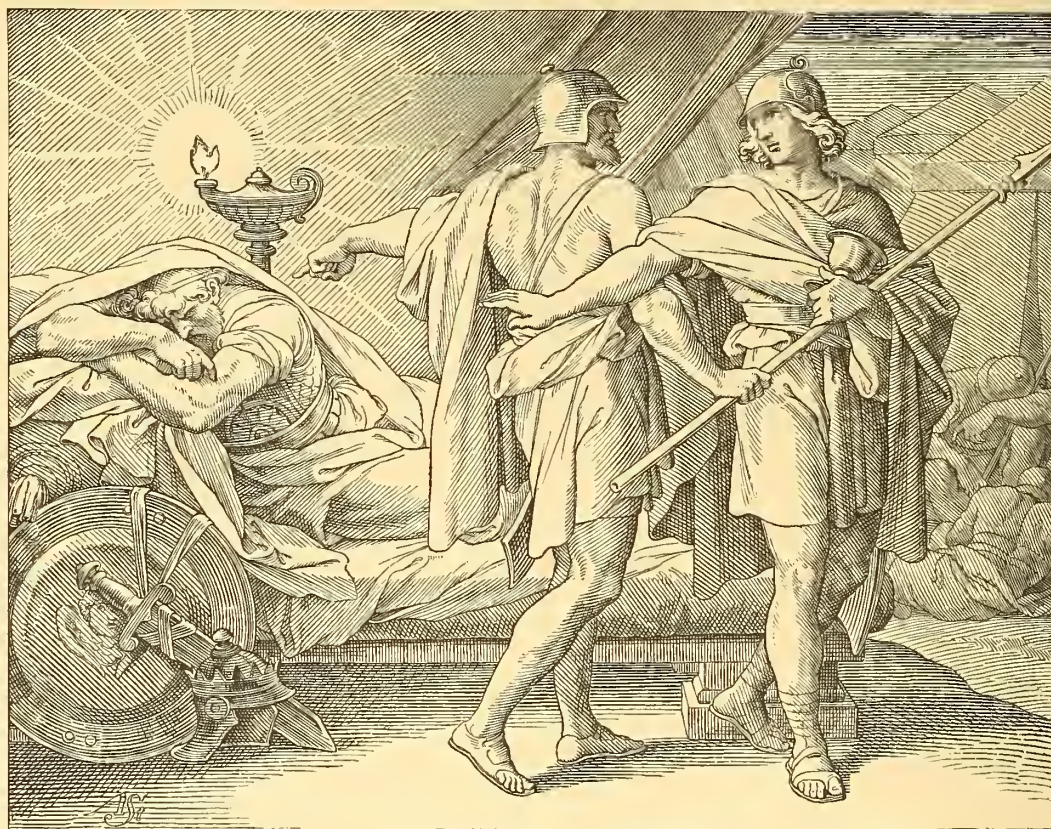
When David heard that Nabal was dead he thanked God again for having kept him from avenging himself: and after a time he sent and asked Abigail to come and be his wife. So she came with five of her maid-servants, and became David's wife.

Not long after this Saul went out against David again with three hundred men. Now there were with David three brothers, whose mother, Zeruiah, was David's older sister. David was very fond of these three young men; they were all brave soldiers, and the eldest of them, Joab, afterwards became captain of David's army.

So when Saul came and pitched his camp on a hill near where David and his men were hiding, David and Abishai, one of these brothers, went down by night to spy

out how things were in Saul's camp. They found Saul sleeping in the midst of his army, and Abner, the captain of his army, sleeping near him, and Saul's spear was stuck in the ground beside his bolster.

Abishai wanted to kill Saul, but David said that he must not because Saul was the Lord's anointed, and that God would slay him at the proper time. But he told Abishai to take away Saul's spear, and the jug of water that was at his bolster, to let him know that they had been there.



So they took the spear and the jug of water and went softly away, and no one waked up. But when David had gone up to the top of a hill that was opposite, he cried out with a loud voice to waken Abner; and Abner cried out to know who it was. Then David asked him if that was the way he took care of his king, and bade him look for the king's spear and jug of water. Then Saul called out, "Is that thy voice, my son David?" And David said, "It is my voice, my lord, O king." And he asked Saul why he came out against him when he had never done him harm; and Saul said that he had been very foolish, and that he would go back home again; and he did so, but David and his men remained in the wilderness.



After a time the Philistines gathered a great army to fight against Israel, and when Saul saw how many the Philistines were he was afraid. And he disguised himself, and went by night to a woman at Endor, who was a witch, and asked her to bring back Samuel from the dead. And presently there was an appearance as of an old man, covered with a mantle, such as Samuel used to wear, and Saul knew that it was Samuel. And Samuel asked Saul why he had called him, and Saul said, because he wanted to know how the battle would go. And Samuel told him that God had taken the kingdom from him and had given it to David; and that the victory would be with the Philistines the next day, and that Saul and his sons would be killed. When Saul heard this he fell to the ground with fear, but after he had eaten his courage revived and he went back to his army.

The next day the battle was fought, and it went against the Israelites. Jonathan and his two brothers were killed, and Saul himself was wounded. Then Saul asked his armor-bearer to kill him, for he did not wish to fall into the hands of the Philistines; but he would not: so Saul took his sword, and fell upon it, and died. When David heard that Saul and his sons were dead, he grieved much, not only for the death of his



dear friend Jonathan, but also for the death of Saul, whom he had once loved. And he sang a beautiful lament over Saul and Jonathan, in which he said nothing of Saul's sins, but spoke only of his good qualities.

After Saul was dead, the men of Judah made David king; but Abner, Saul's captain, took Ishbosheth, Saul's only remaining son, and proclaimed him king, and a part of the people followed him, and there was war between the two kings. Abner was devoted to Saul and to all his house, and it was he rather than Ishbosheth who kept up the war. And Abner killed Asahel, the youngest of the three sons of Zeruiah, David's sister. Joab and Abishai, the other two brothers, never forgave Abner for that deed, and Joab watched his opportunity and killed Abner.

When David heard of it he mourned for Abner, and told all the people to mourn;



for Abner was a great man, though he had been David's enemy. And David followed him to the tomb, and sang a lament over him. And not long after Abner was dead two men came and killed Ishbosheth as he lay on his bed.



There were now none of Saul's sons left alive. But Jonathan had a little son, named Mephibosheth, who was five years old when word came that Saul and Jonathan were killed. And when his nurse heard of it she took him up in her arms and ran

away; but as she was running she let him fall, and he became lame. Mephibosheth was too young to do anything when his uncle Ishbosheth was dead, and he stayed in hiding for many years. But after David was settled in his kingdom, he inquired if there were any of Saul's family left to whom he might be kind; and when he heard that a son of Jonathan was living, he sent for him and had him live with him until Mephibosheth died.

Now the ark of God had never been in the tabernacle from the time that the Philistines had taken it in battle until David became king. At first the Philistines had kept it with great delight and triumph; but God sent such plagues upon them that they soon became afraid of it, and sent it back into the land of Israel again, and the people brought it into the house of a man called Abinadab, and it was kept there for about seventy years. But when David had rest from all his enemies, and was fully confirmed as king over all Israel, he brought the ark to Jerusalem with great ceremony and much rejoicing of all the people. Now David had made friends with Hiram, king of Tyre, a city of Phœnicia, a country north of Palestine, and had hired of him carpenters and masons to build him a palace, for the Tyrians were very skilful workmen. And after his palace was built, David spoke to Nathan the prophet, and said that he did not think it was right that the ark of the Lord should be kept in a tabernacle while he lived in a comfortable house, and he wanted to build a house for the Lord. And Nathan was pleased with this and told David to do all that was in his heart.

But that night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, bidding him tell David that the Lord did not wish him to build him a house. God said that David had been a man of war, and had shed much blood, and it was not fitting that he should build a house for the Lord; but he should have a son who would be king after him, who would be a man of peace, and he should build a house for the Lord. And God said that he would never take his mercy away from David and his family, as he had taken it from Saul and his family, but that David's sons should long reign over his chosen people. If they did wrong he would punish them, but he would never forsake them as he had forsaken Saul.

When Nathan told David this he went and prayed to God, giving him thanks for all the mercy that he had shown him up to that time, and especially for the glorious promises that he had given him by the mouth of Nathan. David was a man of many faults, but his love for God was very deep and true, and for that reason the Bible calls him the "man after God's own heart;" for love is of God, and whoever loves most is most like God.

Although David might not build a house for the Lord, from this time on his chief delight and pleasure were to make preparation for the house of God, the magnificent temple at Jerusalem, which the son who was to be born to him should build. He collected gold and silver in great quantities, and sent to his friend Hiram, king of Tyre, and arranged for Hiram to send him great quantities of cedar from the mountains of Lebanon. The men of Tyre were famous sailors; they were the first to send ships around the Mediterranean Sea, and even beyond through the Straits



of Gibraltar, into the wide, unknown ocean. So Hiram sent his ships to Joppa, which was the nearest seaport to Jerusalem; and he bargained with David for wheat and

gave him cedar-trees in exchange; and all through David's life he was laying up materials for the temple which was to be built. All the gold and silver and brass that he took from conquered nations David laid up for this purpose, and also the gifts that were sent him from nations who were afraid of his power or who admired his greatness and wanted to be at peace with him.

Israel had many enemies in the countries which lay to the east and north and southeast of Palestine, and all David's life was more or less occupied with war. His captain, Joab, was a valiant man, and David himself was a famous warrior, and they always conquered their enemies, so that the kingdom of David at last reached far beyond the limits of Palestine, and became one of the most mighty kingdoms of that time. But brave and lion-hearted as David was, and much as he loved God, he committed a sin for which God punished him with many sorrows.

One day as David was sitting on the roof of his palace, he saw a very beautiful woman on the roof of another house, for in that country people spend much of their time on the flat roofs of their houses. David had already six wives, but he wanted this beautiful woman for his wife, and he sent and called her to come to him. Her name was Bathsheba, and David found that she was already married to a man named Uriah, and that Uriah was with Joab and the army, fighting against the enemies of the king.

Then David sent word to Joab to put Uriah in the very front of the battle; and he did so, and Uriah was killed. Joab sent word to David that Uriah was killed, and David sent and took Bathsheba to be his wife. He broke the sixth commandment as well as the seventh; and it was a poor excuse for him that the heathen kings around him did the same things without scruple.

But God was much displeased with David for this great sin, and he sent Nathan to tell him so. David grieved when he heard that God was angry with him, and he prayed earnestly to God for forgiveness. The fifty-first Psalm was written by David while he was repenting of this dreadful sin, and it is a Psalm which expresses the feelings of every one who is sorry for having sinned against God. God forgave David, but he said that he must punish him for his sin; and from that time, though David had great prosperity, his life was full of troubles. As his children grew up they gave him much sorrow, especially Absalom.

Of all David's sons he loved Absalom best. And Absalom was a beautiful young man, with long, flowing hair, and very winning manners, but he was quick-tempered and treacherous. He showed this by his conduct towards his oldest brother, Amnon. Amnon had done Absalom a great wrong; but instead of openly showing the displeasure which he had a right to feel, he invited him to his house, and there had his servants kill him by treachery. Then Absalom was afraid, and ran away and hid, for he thought that his father would never forgive him. So he remained away for three years, and though his father's heart ached for him, he would not send for him.

But Joab saw that David longed after Absalom, and he finally persuaded David to send for Absalom to come back. Still, though he allowed him to come back



to Jerusalem, he would not see him. But after two years Joab persuaded David to forgive Absalom, and so David sent for Absalom and kissed him and forgave him.

But Absalom did not return his father's love, and he made every effort to steal the hearts of the people away from his father. He would go among the people, and whenever he found any one who was in trouble, or discontented, he would get him to

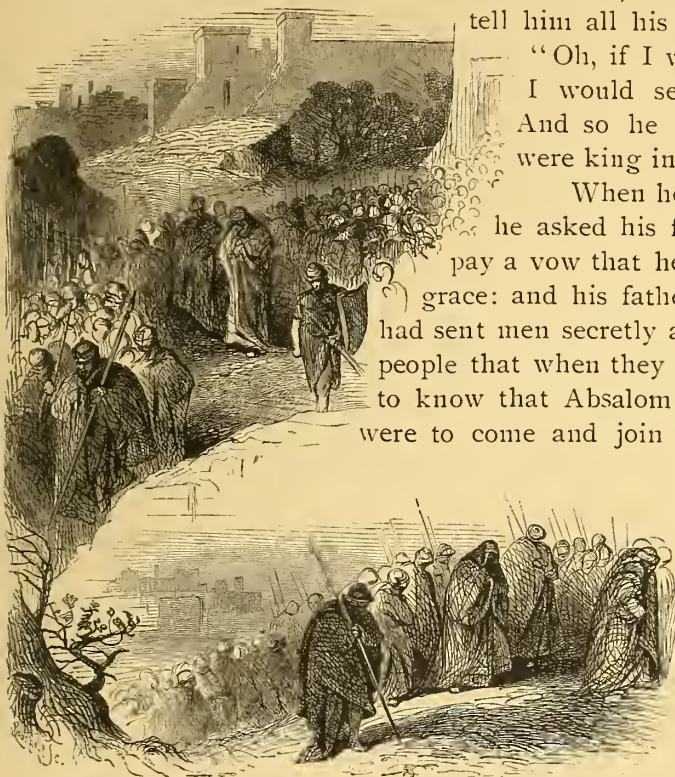
tell him all his troubles, and then he would say, "Oh, if I were only judge in this land, then I would see that every one had justice." And so he made many people wish that he were king instead of his father.

When he thought that the time had come, he asked his father to let him go to Hebron to pay a vow that he had vowed when he was in disgrace: and his father told him to go. But Absalom had sent men secretly all through the country to tell the people that when they heard the trumpet blow they were to know that Absalom was king in Hebron, and they were to come and join him. And he had laid his plots

so well, that a great many of the people came, and his army grew larger and larger. And Ahithophel, David's counsellor, a very wise man, also went over to Absalom.

David heard that Absalom had revolted against him and that all the people were with him, and he resolved to go away

quietly from Jerusalem, for he did not want to fight against his son, and have innocent people suffer. But a great many people went with David, for there were many who loved him, and would not go over to Absalom. And they all went up Mt. Olivet, barefoot and weeping as they went. Now when David was going away, Zadok the high-priest and all the Levites came bringing the ark of God, to go away with him. But David told Zadok to carry the ark of God back to its place, for God was able to bring him back: but if not, let the Lord do what seemed good unto him. And then he told Zadok that he could be of more help to him in the city than if he were with him, because he could keep watch of all that went on, and could send word to him by his son Ahimaaz, and by Jonathan, the son of Abiathar, the priest, who had been with David during all his troubles. And David also sent his friend Hushai the Archite back to the city, for Hushai was a wise counsellor, and he thought he might be able to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. And in fact, as we shall soon see, he did so, and persuaded Absalom to follow a course which was not nearly as wise as that which Ahithophel counseled: and then he sent Jonathan and Ahimaaz to David to tell him all that Absalom was going to do.





While David and his friends were going away, a man named Shimei, one of the house of Saul, came out and cursed David, and cast stones at him, and reviled him. Abishai asked David to let him go and cut off Shimei's head; but David would not. David and his friends went a long distance from Jerusalem, and then they camped to refresh themselves, for they were tired and dusty. And a good man, named Barzillai, the Gileadite, when he heard what had happened, came with some of his friends bringing beds and dishes and wheat and flour and parched corn, and butter and honey and cheese and meat, to David's camp.

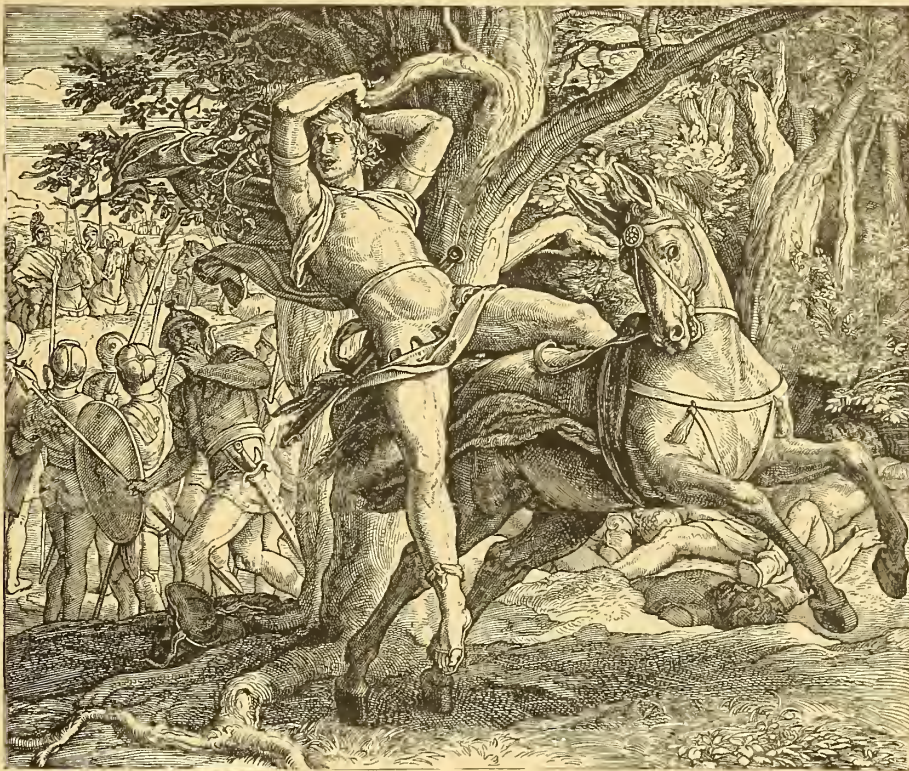
David was very grateful to Barzillai, and when at last he was at peace again, he sent for him and did all that was in his power to show his gratitude.

Then Absalom and all his army came to Jerusalem. Even he was surprised to see Hushai there, for he knew that Hushai had been his father's friend. But Hushai made Absalom believe that he was now his friend: for he wanted to defeat the counsel of wise Ahithophel.

Ahithophel gave Absalom good counsel; he advised him to send twelve thousand men to pursue David, while he had only a few people with him, so he could easily be conquered. But Hushai said it would be better for Absalom to wait until he could gather all Israel together, and then go himself to fight at their head. This misleading counsel pleased Absalom better, and he decided to follow it.

Before long a great many people had joined themselves to David, and Absalom came against them with a large army.

When David knew this he gave strict charge to Joab and Abishai, his captains, saying, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom," for his heart yearned after his ungrateful son.



The two armies met in a forest, and the people of David got the better of the people of Absalom, and the people of Absalom fled before them. Absalom was riding on a mule, and his thick hair caught in the boughs of a tree, and the mule ran away and left him hanging. Then Joab came up and thrust three darts through his heart, and killed him. Then Joab blew the trumpet, and all the people stopped chasing after the king's enemies.

Then Joab sent a man named Cushie, and Ahimaaz, Zadok's son, to run and bring



word to the king. When David knew that Absalom was dead, he went up to the room over the gate and wept: and as he went he said, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God that I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

After Absalom was dead the people who had followed Absalom were sorry that they had rebelled against David, and they sent for him to come back to Jerusalem, that he might once more rule over the whole nation. And David did so, and he forgave all those who had rebelled, and had none of them punished. Even Shimei, who had cursed him, was forgiven, when he came and fell down before David and confessed his sin.

After that there was a famine, and God said it was because of Saul's cruelties to the Gibeonites. And the Gibeonites asked that seven of Saul's descendants might be given up to them to be slain, as atonement, and David gave up seven of the descendants of Saul, and they were slain. Before our Saviour came people did not know the law of forgiveness of enemies, as they now do.

THE BOOKS OF KINGS AND CHRONICLES.

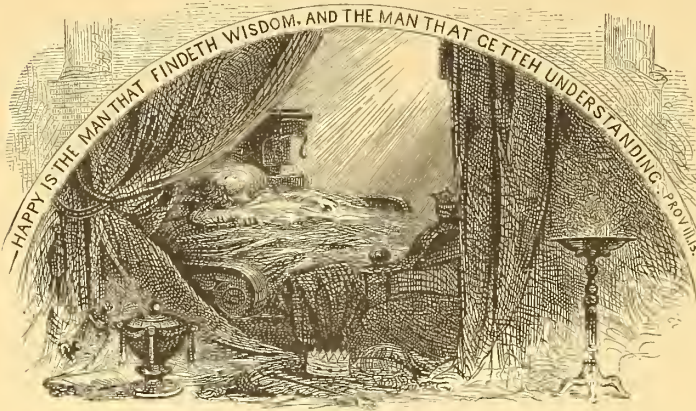
AT last David was an old man, and he wanted to make Solomon his son king before his death, that there might be no quarrels between his sons when he was gone. Therefore he called Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, who was one of his chief captains, and bade them put Solomon on the king's own mule, and lead him through the city and proclaim that he was king. And when this had been done he called together all his court, the princes of the tribes, and the great men, and the high officers of the army, and he stood up before them, and Solomon stood before him, and he gave him his last charge in the presence of them all. He told him how he had had it in his heart to build a house for the Lord, and how God had told him that he was not to do it because he had been a man of war, but that his son should build it. And he told how he had gathered together timber and stones, and gold and silver in great quantities for the vessels of the house of the Lord, and he charged Solomon to go on and build it according to the patterns which he had provided for him. And he bade Solomon be strong and fear not, for God would not fail nor forsake him if he continued faithful.



When David had ended his charge to Solomon all the princes and captains and great men brought offerings for the temple, and the people blessed God, and then the priests offered sacrifices, and afterwards every one made merry in a great feast.

Not long after this David died. He had been king for forty years, and during that time he had put down all the enemies of his country, and he had made himself ruler over a very large kingdom, reaching almost from the river Euphrates to the Mediterranean Sea. Now Solomon could look forward to a peaceful reign in which he could build the Temple of the Lord.

After David was dead, Solomon became king over all Israel. And not long after he came to the throne Solomon had a dream in which God appeared to him and said, "Ask me what I shall give thee!" And what did Solomon ask for? not riches nor



honor, nor victory over his enemies, nor even a long life. What he asked for was wisdom that he might rule that great nation in the right way. And God was pleased with Solomon's choice, and told him that he should be the wisest man that had ever lived, and that he should have all the other things too. So Solomon awoke and found that it was a dream, but he knew that God had sent him

the dream, and would surely bless him if he did right.

Then Solomon offered up sacrifices, and made a feast to all his people, in honor of his coming to the kingdom. And the promise of God was kept to him. He became a very wise man, knowing not only how to rule his kingdom well, but many other things. He wrote many books on many subjects. The Bible tells us that he spoke three thousand proverbs and a thousand and five songs, and that he wrote about all sorts of plants and trees and animals. And the rest of God's promise was also kept; his kingdom grew larger, until it became the most powerful kingdom that there was in the world at that time.

Not very long after Solomon became king he had an opportunity to prove whether or not God had given him the wisdom that he asked for. One morning as he was sitting on his judgment seat, two women came before him. Each carried a babe in her arms, but one of them was dead.

One of the mothers told the story. The two women lived in the same house, and both had a little child born the same day. But one night one of the babies died, and its mother took her dead babe and stole softly up to the other woman while she slept, and took away her living babe from her arms and put the dead babe there instead. When this woman awoke in the morning she found that her babe was dead; but when she looked again she saw that it was not her babe, but that of the other woman. This was the story that one woman told. But the other woman said, No, the living babe was hers, and the dead babe belonged to the other woman. For both of them wanted the living child.

Then Solomon called for a man with a sword, and he said, "Take the living babe and divide it in half, and give one half to each mother."

Then the true mother of the child cried out, "O my lord, give her the living babe

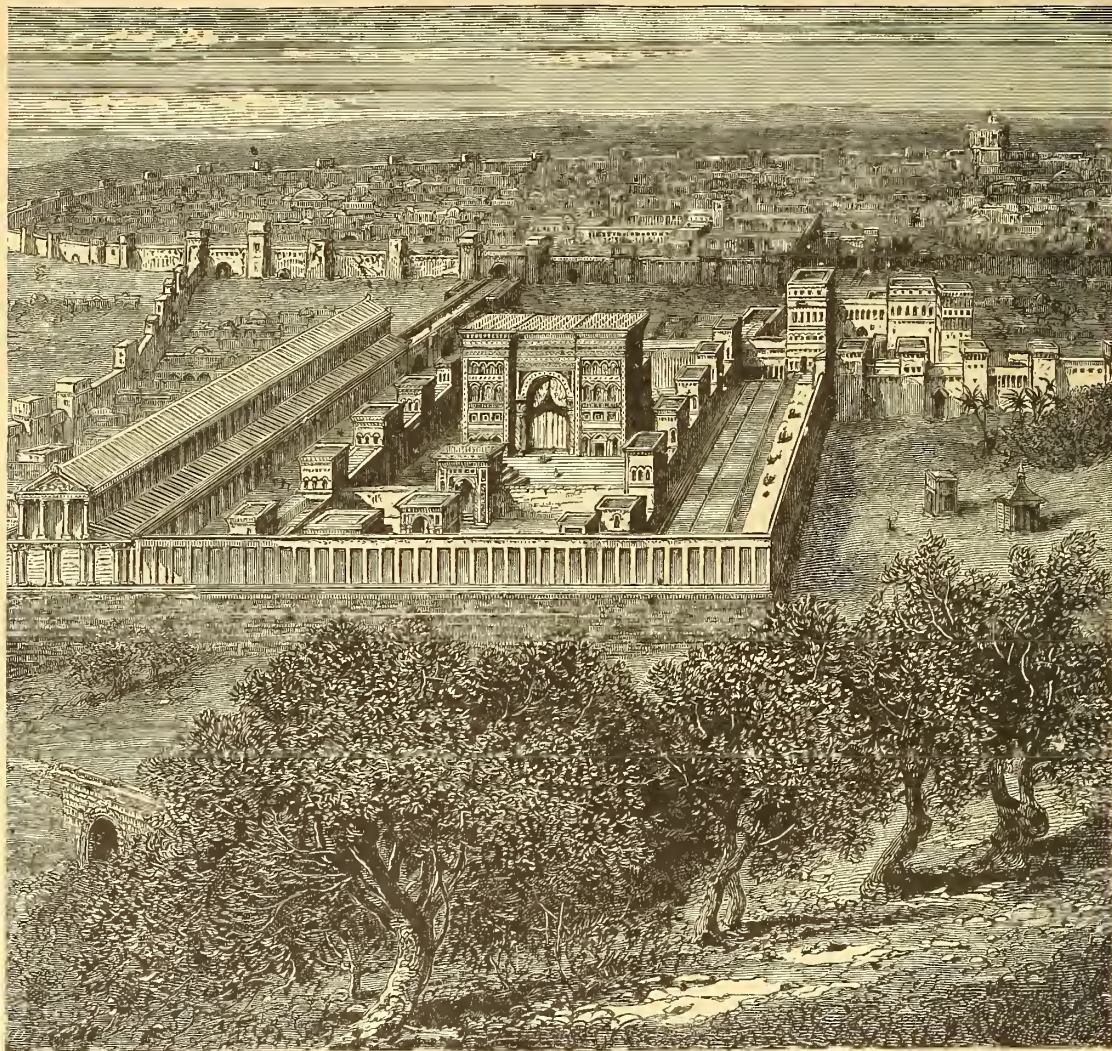
and don't kill it," for she could not bear that her little baby should be killed. But the other woman said, "Yes, let it be neither mine nor yours, but divide it."

Then the king said, "The one who said 'Do not kill it' is the true mother: give it to her." And every one was surprised at the wisdom of the king.

As soon as King Solomon had settled the affairs of his kingdom and appointed



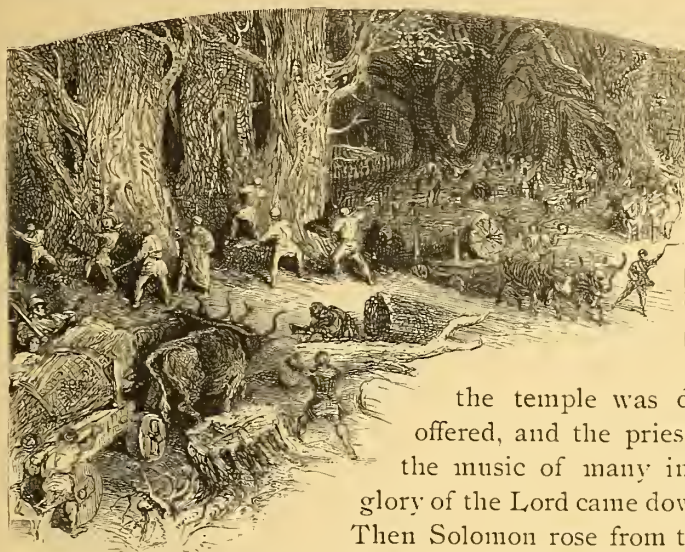
his chief officers, he began to build the temple. For this great work his father had been many years preparing, and Solomon had plenty of money, of gold and silver, for the work. He began by asking the help of Hiram, King of Tyre, who had been his father's friend. The men of Tyre were famous for their ships, and Solomon agreed with Hiram to fit out a fleet to send to various countries for the brass and ivory and other things that he needed. And as the men of Tyre knew how to work in metals better than the men of any other nation, and as they were also famous for the beautiful cloth they wove, and for the brilliant color, called Tyrian purple, which they knew how to dye, Solomon also hired a great many of Hiram's men to help in the work of the temple. The chief workman of all was from Tyre.



Solomon sent a great many men to Lebanon, in Hiram's country, to cut down the thick cedar trees for which Lebanon is famous, and which are very precious. The great logs were floated down the mountain streams to the sea, and there made into rafts and brought down to Joppa, which is the seaport of Jerusalem. The road between Joppa and Jerusalem must have been full of stir: pack-horses and mules carrying the rich stuffs and metals and ivory which the ships brought, or dragging up the logs from Lebanon, and people hurrying to and fro on the king's business.

Besides these materials, vast blocks of marble were cut out of the quarries of Jerusalem and of Bethlehem. And thus was built the glorious temple, with its courts and marble columns, and Holy Place and Holy of Holies, like those in the tab-

ernacle, but much larger and more beautiful. The gold that was used in building the temple was a hundred thousand talents, and the silver a thousand thousand, and the



brass was not weighed, it was so much. The temple stood on the very top of Mt. Moriah, which was a high, steep hill in the midst of the city of Jerusalem. It took more than seven years to build it, and when it was finished Solomon and all the people of Israel had a great festival, which lasted for fourteen days. On the first day of the festival

the temple was dedicated. Many sacrifices were offered, and the priests sang loud songs of praise, with the music of many instruments, and as they sang the glory of the Lord came down and filled the house of the Lord.

Then Solomon rose from the throne on which he had been sitting, near the great altar, and he stretched out his hands and blessed the people who were crowded in the great courts below. And he knelt down before the altar and prayed aloud, asking God to bless his people Israel, there and in all time to come, and forgive their sins when they sinned against him.

Then the king offered thank-offerings and peace-offerings, and after that all the people feasted and made merry, for every one was glad that the house of God was built, a temple in which the only living and true God would dwell.



dred golden targets and all kinds of beautiful things. And it was said that silver was as plentiful in Jerusalem as stones.

After that Solomon built a beautiful palace for himself in Jerusalem, and fine houses for himself in other towns, and a palace for his wife, for he had married the daughter of Pharaoh, King of Egypt. He also had a throne made of solid ivory, overlaid with gold; and twelve golden lions, six on each side, on the steps that went up to the throne. And he made three hundred golden shields and two hun-



All the people of other nations were talking about King Solomon, his riches, and the fine buildings that he built, and his wise way of ruling his people. The queen of Sheba, a country far south of Palestine, came to see him and to hear his wisdom. She was a very rich queen, and she came with a long train of camels, bringing spices and precious stones and gold as gifts for Solomon. And when she saw all his riches, his houses and his throne, and the great number of his servants and attendants and the fine garments that they wore, and when she heard his wisdom, she was much surprised, and said that she had not believed all that she had heard before she came to Jerusalem, but she found that it was not half the truth, for everything was far grander than she had supposed. But most of all she prized his wisdom,

and she said, "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants who stand continually before thee and hear thy wisdom."

But with all Solomon's wisdom he forsook God later on in his life, for he married many heathen wives, and they persuaded him to serve their gods. And so God said that he would take the kingdom away from Solomon's sons, and would give it to some one else. Only he would not take it entirely away, but would leave them the tribes of Judah and Benjamin for David's sake, for David had been his true servant.

Now there was a young man named Jeroboam, who was a very bright and industrious man, and Solomon had put him in charge of the affairs of the tribe of Joseph. One day as Jeroboam was going out of the city a prophet named Abijah met him. Jeroboam had on a new robe, and Abijah took it and tore it into twelve pieces, and told Jeroboam to take ten of them, for God would rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and would give ten tribes of it to him, because Solomon had served false gods.



When Solomon heard of this he tried to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam fled to Egypt and stayed there until Solomon was dead.

Now when Solomon was dead the people came together and crowned his son Rehoboam king. When Jeroboam heard it he returned from Egypt, and he came with a number of other men to the king and asked him to be more gentle in his rule than his father had been, for Solomon had made their burden heavy. The old men, who had been his father's counselors, advised Rehoboam to answer the people gently, because he could win their favor thus: but the young men, his own friends, advised him to be stern and severe. So when Jeroboam and the people came again to hear his answer, he told them that he would be much more severe than his father had been. At this the people went away and made Jeroboam king. Only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin and the Levites were true to Rehoboam.

At first Rehoboam thought of fighting against those tribes who had thus rebelled, and forcing them to return to him. He gathered together a hundred and fourteen thousand picked men of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and made ready to march. But a prophet, named Shemaiah, came to him and told him that he must not fight against the tribes that had rebelled, for it was all from God because of Solomon's sins. Rehoboam obeyed the command of God and did not fight them; but afterwards he displeased God by serving idols, and so the Lord let Shishak, king of Egypt, come



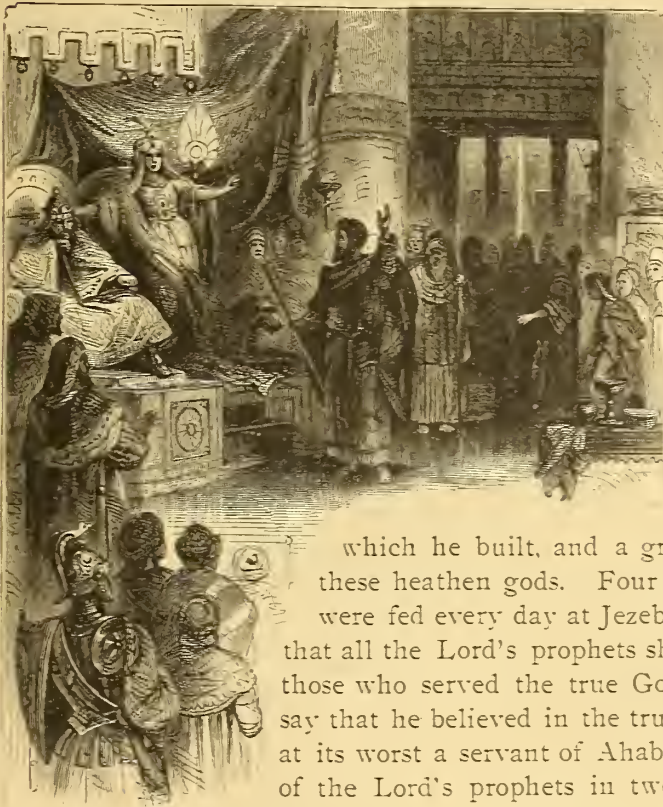
up against him with a great army. And Shishak took away the golden shields that Solomon had made, and all the treasures of the king's house and of the temple. Rehoboam had some brazen shields made in place of the golden shields that Shishak took away.

Rehoboam reigned seventeen years, and there was war between him and Jeroboam most of the time. And then he died, and his son Abijam reigned in his stead.

As for Jeroboam, he made golden calves and put them in two of the cities of Samaria, for so the kingdom of the ten tribes was called, and told the people that it was too far for them to go to Jerusalem to worship, and that these calves were now their gods. So the people worshipped idols and forgot the true God more and more.

After Jeroboam died there were other kings over Samaria, but they all wor-

shipped idols and made the people sin. At last a king came to the throne whose name was Ahab, who did evil beyond all that had been done by any of the kings before him. He married a very wicked woman named Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Sidon, and she persuaded him to serve the gods of the Phœnicians, Baal and Ashteroth. And Ahab built a great temple for Baal in the city of Samaria, which he made his capital, and a temple for Ashteroth in the city of Jezreel,



which he built, and a great many men became priests of these heathen gods. Four hundred and fifty heathen priests were fed every day at Jezebel's table, and Jezebel gave orders that all the Lord's prophets should be killed, and she persecuted those who served the true God, so that at last no one dared to say that he believed in the true God. When the persecution was at its worst a servant of Ahab's, named Obadiah, hid a hundred of the Lord's prophets in two caves, fifty in each, and brought them food. If Jezebel had heard of it she would have killed the

prophets and Obadiah too. This Obadiah is not the prophet who wrote one of the books of the Bible. He was the governor of Ahab's house, which was a very important office, and he must have been a very faithful man, and very useful to Ahab, or Jezebel would have killed him, too; for we cannot believe that Obadiah worshipped Baal and Ashteroth. He was far too brave a man to deny his God.

Then God sent a prophet called Elijah, who came and stood before Ahab and Jezebel as they sat upon their throne, and said to them that there should not be dew nor rain for three years, because they had displeased God. Now a drouth is a dreadful thing everywhere, but it is most dreadful in those hot eastern countries, where soon after rain ceases the springs dry up, and the grass and grain wither away and die.

God told Elijah to go to a place where there was a brook called Cherith, and live there during the drouth. It was far away among the hills, and there was no

way to get any food there: but every morning and every evening some ravens came, and brought bread and meat to him. At last the brook dried up, and then God told Elijah to go to a little village called Zarephath. It was not in Palestine at all, but north of Palestine, in Phœnicia, and even there the drouth had come. Elijah went to Zarephath, as the Lord had bidden him to do, and when he arrived there he sat down outside of the city gate, and he saw a poor widow picking up sticks. So Elijah asked her to bring him some water to drink, and as she was going for it he called after her, "Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand." Then the woman told him that she had not any, that all that she had was a little flour in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse, and she was gathering the sticks that she might make them into a cake and bake them for her and her son, that they might have one more meal before they should all starve to death together.



Then Elijah told her to make a cake for him first, and afterwards for herself and her son, for God said that the oil and the flour should not waste away until the famine was over. The woman had faith in Elijah's words, and she did as he asked her to do, and Elijah went home and lived with her, and the flour and the oil lasted and gave them enough to eat until the famine was over, as God had said.

It was not a small thing that this poor widow did, when she thus had faith in Elijah's word, and gave him the cake made of her very last flour and oil. How many of us would be willing to give our very all to God's servants, even though there is nothing to prevent our getting more, as there was in that time of famine? And this poor woman had not known God as we may know him. We have the Bible to tell us of the wonderful things that he has done in the past, and we know that he is always the same. But this poor woman had hardly heard of God.

After a time the widow's son fell ill and died, and the woman came and told Elijah. Then he took the little boy out of his mother's arms and carried him up into the loft where he slept and laid him on his own bed. And he prayed to God to let the child's soul come back to him again. Then he stretched himself upon the child to warm him, and then he prayed again; and he did thus three times. And



God heard his prayer, and the child's soul came back to him, so that he was alive and well. Then Elijah carried the little boy back to his mother, and from that time she believed in the true God, for before that time she had worshipped idols, like the other people of that country.

At last God sent rain on the earth. But Elijah went far off into the wilderness and lay down under a juniper tree, and asked God to let him die, for he was dis-



couraged with the sinfulness of the people. Then he went to sleep, and after a time an angel came and touched him and told him to arise and eat. And he looked, and there was a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water. So he ate, and then he

went a long way off into the desert. There God spoke to him and bade him go and tell Ahab that he was to be punished for all the evil that he had done, and that the dogs should lick up his blood and the blood of his sons, and that they should eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel, their royal city.

After this Benhadad, king of Syria, came to war against Ahab, and Ahab sent to Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, to ask him to help him fight Benhadad. So Jehoshaphat came with his army, but he asked Ahab first to send for a prophet of the Lord to tell them whether they ought to go or not. So the king sent for the prophets, and they all told him to go and prosper. But Jehoshaphat was not satisfied, and he said, "Is there no other prophet that we could inquire of?" And Ahab said, "There is one other, Micaiah, the son of Imlah, but I hate him, for he always prophesies evil about me." Then Micaiah was called, and he said that he saw all Israel scattered as sheep without a shepherd, meaning by this that they would be defeated



by Benhadad. But Ahab would not believe him, and they went to the battle, and Ahab was shot by an arrow and wounded, and his blood ran down into his chariot, and at evening he died, and they brought his body to Samaria to be buried, and the dogs came and licked up the blood from his chariot, as the Lord had said by Elijah.

Now the time came when God would take Elijah to heaven; and Elijah was walking towards Bethel, and a young prophet, named Elisha, was walking with him.

Elijah had told Elisha to stay at Gilgal, for God had sent him to Bethel. But Elisha would not leave Elijah. There was a school of the prophets in Bethel, and the young prophets told Elisha that God was going to take Elijah away, and he said he knew it. Then they went on to Jericho, where there was another school of the prophets, and they told Elisha the same thing, and he again said that he knew it. Then they came to the river Jordan, and Elijah took off the mantle that he wore and smote the waters, and they were divided, and the two went over on dry ground.



Then Elijah asked Elisha what he should do for him before he was taken away, and Elisha asked for an elder son's portion of his spirit: for the portion of an elder son was double that of other sons. And Elijah said that if he were with him when he was taken away it should be so. While they were talking a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared, and Elijah was carried away to heaven. But his mantle fell from off him and Elisha picked it up; and he went back to the river Jordan and smote the waters with the mantle and said, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" And the waters

were parted and he went through on dry land. The young men of the prophets' school at Jericho were watching him from a hill near the city, and they said, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha," and they went to meet him and bowed down before him.



After a time the king of Israel, Ahab's son, Jehoram, sent for the kings of Judah and Edom to come and help him fight against Moab. As they went they came to a desert place where there was no water. So they sent for Elisha to come and tell them how to get water, and Elisha told them to dig a great many ditches. When they had done so God sent water and filled the ditches, and the army could drink. But



the king of Moab saw the water looking red under the morning sun, and he thought that the three kings' armies must have quarrelled and killed one another. And the army of Moab rushed out in confusion to get the spoils, and the three kings' armies overcame them, and made the king of Moab serve Israel as he had done before.

At one time the army of Syria came up against Israel, and Elisha sent word to the king where the Syrians were, and saved him and his army.

He did this a number of times, so that at last the Syrian king tried to take Elisha and kill him. And he sent a number of chariots and horsemen to the city where Elisha was. But Elisha prayed to God and he smote the Syrians with blindness, and Elisha came out and offered to show them their way, and he led them to Samaria, into the very midst of the army of Israel. So the Syrian king saw that he could do nothing, and he went back to his own country.

One day a widow of one of the prophets came to Elisha and told him that she was in debt, and her creditor was going to sell her two sons for slaves to pay the debt. Elisha asked her what she had in the house, and she said she had nothing but a pot of oil. Then he told her to go and borrow all the empty jars and jugs that she could and pour oil into them from her pot, and there should be enough oil to fill them all. And she did so, and sold the oil, and there was enough to pay the debt.

Now Elisha used to travel about the country from one school of the



prophets to another; and one day, as he was passing through a place called Shunem, a rich woman invited him to her house. And whenever he went that way he stopped at her house, and she had a room built for him, and put in it a bed and a table and a chair.

Elisha wanted to do something for her, and he said to Gehazi, his servant, "What shall be done for her?" And Gehazi said, "She has no child." So Elisha prayed God to send her a child, and God sent her a son and the woman was very happy. But when

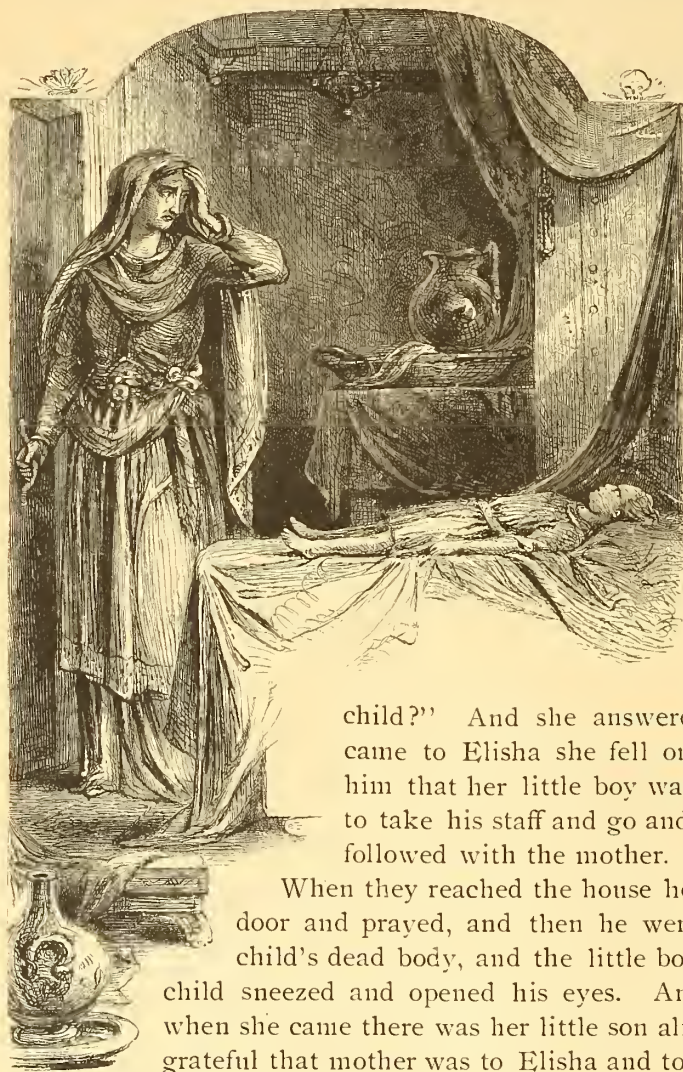
the little boy could run about he went one day into the field where his father was watching his reapers. And the sun was hot, and he said to his father, "My head, my head!" Then his father said, "Carry him to his mother." So they carried him to his mother and laid him on her lap, but about noon he died.

Then the mother took her little boy and laid him on the bed in the room that was kept for Elisha, and she rode on an ass and went to Mount Carmel, where Elisha was. Elisha saw her coming, and he sent Gehazi to ask, "Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the

child?" And she answered, "It is well." But when she came to Elisha she fell on her knees before him, and told him that her little boy was dead. Then Elisha told Gehazi to take his staff and go and lay it on the child's face; and he followed with the mother.

When they reached the house he went into his room and shut the door and prayed, and then he went and stretched himself over the child's dead body, and the little body grew warm, and presently the child sneezed and opened his eyes. And Elisha sent for the mother, and when she came there was her little son alive and well! We can think how grateful that mother was to Elisha and to God when she took the little boy in her arms again.

Now the king of Syria had a captain named Naaman, and he was a great captain, but he had a dreadful disease, called leprosy. His wife had a little maid who had been carried away captive out of Israel, and one day, when the little Israelitish maid





was waiting on her mistress, she said that she wished her master were with the prophet that was in Samaria, for he would cure him of his leprosy.

Some one repeated the little maid's words, and the king of Syria heard of it,

and told Naaman that he would send him with a letter to King Joram. So he sent Naaman, with a present of gold and silver and fine clothes and a letter to the king, asking him to heal Naaman's leprosy.

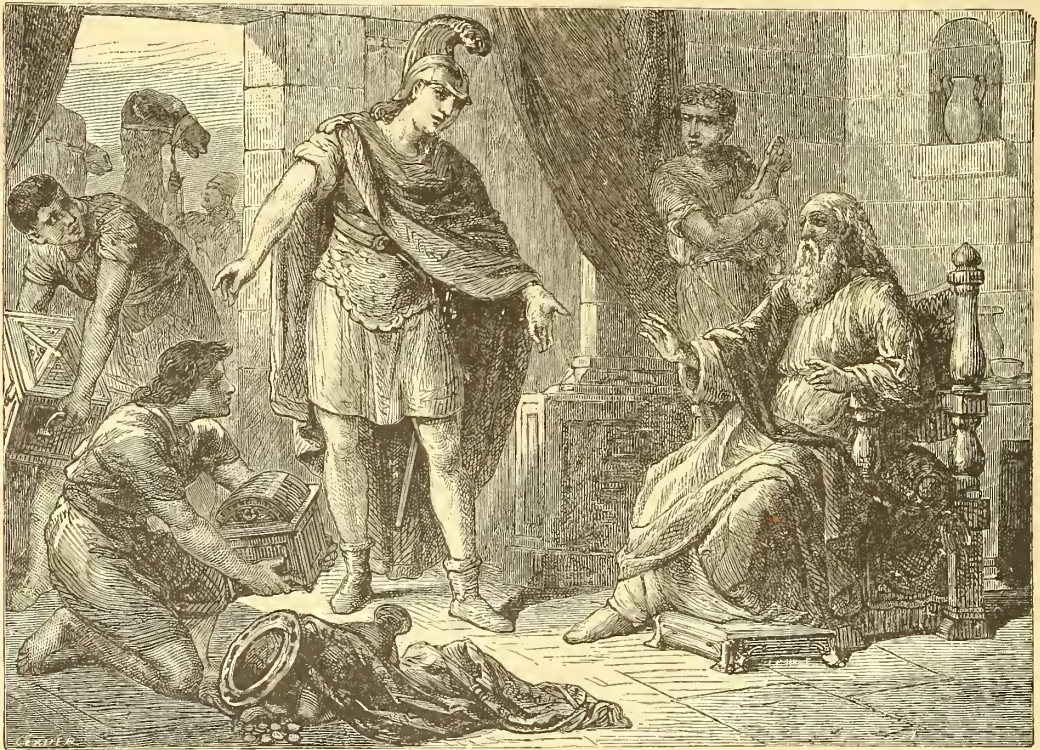
When King Joram read the letter he rent his clothes and said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man sends to me to heal a man of his leprosy?" For there was then no cure for leprosy, and is not now: so Jehoram thought that the king of Syria was only trying to fix a quarrel on him.

Elisha heard of it, and sent word to remind the king that there was a God in Israel, and bade him send Naaman to him.

Then Naaman came with his horses and chariot and stood at Elisha's door. And Elisha sent word to him, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thou shalt be clean."

Then Naaman was very angry, for he had thought that Elisha would come out to him and do some wonderful thing to heal him, and he said that the rivers of his own country were as good as the river Jordan: so he went away in a rage.

But his servants came and begged him to obey the prophet's word. So Naaman went and did as Elisha had said, and he was healed at once.



Then he felt very grateful, and he went back to Elisha, with all his servants, and carried him rich presents; but Elisha would not take them. And Naaman

believed in the true God, for he knew that none of the idols of Samaria could do for him what the God of Elisha had done.

Now the time had come to fulfil the word of the Lord that he had spoken to Ahab by Elijah. King Jehoram had a captain named Jehu, and it was he whom the Lord had appointed to put an end to the family of Ahab. Therefore Elisha sent a young

prophet to anoint Jehu, secretly, to be king of Israel. When Jehu's fellow captains heard of it they proclaimed him king, and then they all set out for Jezreel, where Jehoram was.

When Jehoram heard that a great army was coming he went out to meet it, not knowing who it was, but thinking at first that it was the army of Syria. When he saw that it was his own captain who had rebelled against him, he turned his chariot to flee: but Jehu drew a bow and killed him, and commanded that his body should be thrown out upon the ground for the dogs to eat. Then he drove on to Jezreel. The old queen, Jezebel, saw him coming from the window of her palace, for it was built upon the wall. She was as brave as ever she had been, and she dressed her hair and painted her face and

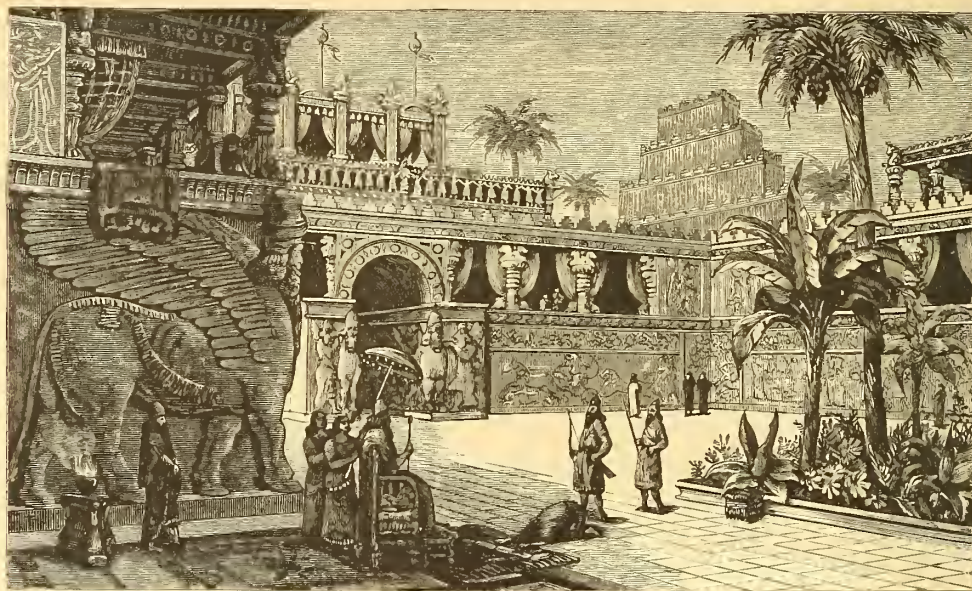


looked out of the window and spoke scornfully to Jehu as he drove up. Then Jehu called out, "Who is on my side?" and two or three chamberlains looked out of the window. And he said, "Throw her down." So they threw her down, and it killed her, and the dogs came and ate her, as God had said by the mouth of Elijah.

Jehu destroyed the temples of Baal and Ashtoreth, but he did not destroy the golden calves which Jeroboam had made, and the people of Israel continued to worship them. For this reason God began to cut short the power of Israel, and much of the land of Israel passed under the power of other kings.

JONAH.

THE name of this prophet was Jonah. The Bible does not tell us who he was, but the Jews have a tradition that he was that widow's son whom Elijah restored to life, and that he afterwards became the servant of Elijah, and that it was he whom Elisha



sent to anoint Jehu king. If this is true he must have been very old at this time, for it was now the beginning of the reign of Jeroboam II., the great-grandson of Jehu.

But some years before this we know that Jonah was sent by God on such an errand as none of the prophets had ever been sent on before. For God told Jonah to arise and go to the great city of Nineveh and prophesy against it. Now Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, which was a country a long way off, on the river Euphrates, and it was then the most powerful nation in the world. Nineveh was a magnificent city, full of splendid palaces and temples and great statues and large parks and fields. It was sixty miles around, and contained hundreds of thousands of people.

Jonah did not want to go to prophesy against Nineveh, and so he resolved to run away from the presence of God. He



went down to Joppa and took passage on a ship which was bound for Tarshish, far off in Spain. But the Lord sent a fearful storm, which nearly wrecked the ship. Jonah knew what it meant, and he told the sailors to throw him out into the sea. They did not wish to do so, but he told them that they must, and as the vessel was in danger of being wrecked, they at last obeyed, and the storm ceased.

God had prepared a great fish, which swallowed Jonah and then swam to the shore, and after three days cast him upon the land. And Jonah no longer tried to run away from God: he went to Assyria and entered the city of Nineveh, and prophesied that the city was going to be destroyed. And the men of Nineveh repented of their sins when they heard Jonah, and asked God to forgive them: so God did not destroy their city.

But Jonah was very angry because his prophecies did not come true. And he went out of the city and built a hut and sat there to see what would happen. It was



very hot, and God made a gourd to grow, and it shaded Jonah with its large leaves, and he was glad for the gourd. Then God sent a worm to gnaw the gourd and it withered, and again Jonah was angry. Then God said, "You are sorry for the gourd, for which you have taken no trouble, and should not I have pity on this great city, in which are so many innocent children and much cattle?" Thus God reproved Jonah.

THE BOOKS OF KINGS AND CHRONICLES AGAIN.

FROM this time on the people of Israel went on from bad to worse. They worshipped the gods of the nations around them, and even made their children pass through the fire to the fearful god Moloch. This was an enormous brazen image with the head of a calf, made hot by a fire kindled beneath it, in whose outstretched arms the tender little children were laid, then to roll down into the fire below. And the people were turbulent and bloody, killing one king after another. God sent many prophets to warn them of their evil deeds and to try to make them give up their wickedness, but it was of no use. Amos and Hosea and Nahum, whose prophecies are in the Bible, were among the prophets sent to Israel at this time. Finally God sent the king of Assyria against them. He came and besieged the city of Samaria for three years, and the people suffered horribly from famine. At last he took the city, and he carried away to Nineveh a great many of the people—all the priests and the nobles and the rich men, and left only the poor people to till the land. He left so few people that the wild beasts and even lions began to come up into their towns and villages. So then the king of Assyria sent some of his own people to live among them, to keep the country from going entirely to waste.



The men who were carried away to Assyria never came back, as a nation, and the kingdom of Israel, that is, of the ten tribes, was at an end for ever. The people who were left in the land, part Israelites and part foreign, were called Samaritans, and we shall hear of them again.

While the kingdom of Israel was thus going on from bad to worse, the kingdom of Judah had some kings who were good and served the Lord, and some who were wicked and served idols. Jehoshaphat, that king who had been so friendly with wicked Ahab, was a good king, but he took Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, for his son's wife. Athaliah was like her mother, and during her long life she did great evil, and caused many people to worship idols and to do wrong.

At last, just before the kingdom of Israel was broken up, a king began to reign in Judæa whose name was Hezekiah. His father Ahaz had been very wicked, and had shut up the Lord's house, and had worshipped idols, and made his people to sin,

but the mother of Hezekiah was the daughter of a prophet, called Zechariah, though not the Zechariah whose prophecies are in the Bible. Hezekiah was the best king who had reigned since Solomon, and there was no king after him so good as he. In his days the great prophet Isaiah lived, and he helped Hezekiah to reform his kingdom and to restore the worship of God.

Still Hezekiah had many troubles. Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came up against him, and took many of his cities, and laid siege to Jerusalem. The people were all in great distress, for they were much afraid of Sennacherib. But Isaiah prophesied that the king should go back to his own country, and that he should do Judah no harm, and it was so; for the Lord sent his angel in the night and killed a great number of his men, and of his nobles and officers, and the next morning those of the army that were left went back to their own land.

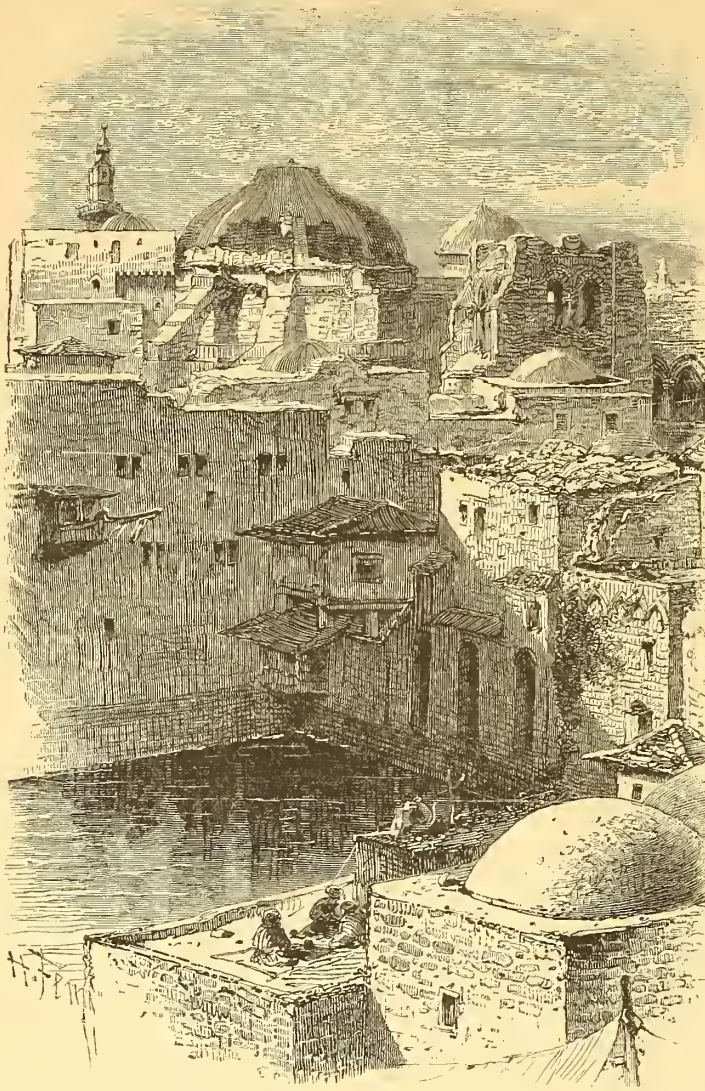
At one time a party of men came to see Hezekiah. They were from Babylon, which was not a very great nation at that time. Hezekiah received them kindly and

showed them all his treasures. After they were gone Isaiah came and asked Hezekiah what they had seen, and Hezekiah told him that they had seen all the treasures of the palace and of the Lord's house. Then Isaiah told him that the days would come when the king of Babylon would come up against Jerusalem and would conquer it, and would carry away all the treasures of the Lord's house and of the king's palace to Babylon. For the heart of Hezekiah had grown proud, because he had done so many good things, and had made so many friends, and had received so many presents. It is hard to keep humble when one is rich and everybody speaks well of one. But when Isaiah reproved Hezekiah he repented, and prayed God to forgive him, and God did forgive him. So no harm came to Jerusalem in his day. When it did come it was because the people were wicked and sinned against God.

When Hezekiah had reigned about fourteen years he became very ill, and the prophet Isaiah came to him and bade

him set his house in order, for God had said that he was to die. Then Hezekiah prayed to the Lord and besought him to let him live: and God heard him and sent Isaiah back to tell him that he should live fifteen years longer.





Hezekiah did much to improve Jerusalem, besides repairing the temple and pulling down the altars of idols. He made a great pool and brought water into the city, and built storehouses and fine stables for horses and for his flocks, and made many beautiful things for the temple.

Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, was a very wicked king, and he rebuilt all the idol altars that his father had pulled down. His son Josiah was a very good king and served God with all his heart. He was only eight years old when he began to reign, but as soon as he was grown up he set to work to restore the temple, for it was all in ruins.

While the temple was being repaired, Hilkiah, the high-priest, found the book of the law of the Lord, which had been neglected for many years, and Shaphan, a scribe, or learned man, brought it and read it to the king. When Josiah heard it read he rent his clothes with grief

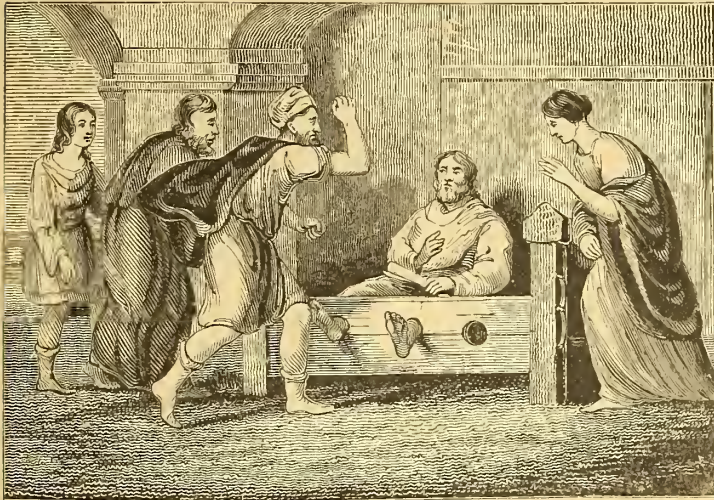
that the laws of God had been so little obeyed, and he restored the temple worship according to the directions in the book of the law. But the hearts of the people were not changed, and after Josiah died they went on from bad to worse, until God sent a great punishment upon them.

But before the final punishment came he sent evils upon them as a warning. The king of Egypt came and conquered them, and took away their king Jehoahaz to Egypt, and made his brother Jehoiakim king. But Jehoiakim had to pay a great sum of money every year to the king of Egypt, and he had to tax his people very heavily to get it, and that made them all very unhappy and discontented.

JEREMIAH.

AT this time there was a great and good prophet named Jeremiah, whose heart was almost broken by the troubles which had come upon his people. He preached to them

day and night, warning them to turn to the Lord. But many of the priests and even of the prophets were wicked, and they turned upon Jeremiah and had him put in prison, and for a time his feet were made fast in the stocks.



Jeremiah had one friend who was true to him in all his trouble. It was a young man named Baruch. While Jeremiah was in the prison Baruch came to him, and wrote down all the proph-

ecies that Jeremiah had spoken to the people. And after they were written Baruch went to a room over one of the new gates which Josiah had built for the temple, and a number of the princes came together there, and Baruch read to them all the warnings and the teachings of Jeremiah. They were terrified when they heard what God had spoken, and one of the princes, named Jehudi, carried the roll to the king. King Jehoiakim was sitting beside a fire which had been kindled in a brazier, for the weather was cold, and there were a number of the princes with him. They all listened when Jehudi began to read the roll, but before he had read far the king took the roll out of his hand and cut it into strips and threw it upon the fire. It was a wicked thing to do, but neither the king nor the



princes were afraid, or cared whether they displeased God or not, so hardened were they. Baruch went back and told Jeremiah what had been done to the roll, and Jeremiah

told him to write it out again. But it was too late now to save Jerusalem or the people of Judah. The punishment which God had told them he would send upon them if they forsook him was now drawing near.

By this time the kingdom of Babylon had become a great power; and its king, Nebuchadnezzar, came up against Judæa, and conquered it, and made the king pay him tribute. But after three years Jehoiakim would not pay the tribute, and so Nebuchadnezzar sent the Moabites and the Syrians and other people whom he had conquered, to fight against Judah and to trouble the people in every way that they could. And afterwards the king of Babylon came himself and fought against Jerusalem, and put Jeconiah, or Jehoiachin, in fetters and



carried him and his mother to Babylon, and with them all the treasures of the Lord's house, and he took away many princes and prophets and priests, and all the best soldiers and smiths and workmen, and left only the poorer people in the land.

Among those who were carried away captive to Babylon were the prophet Ezekiel and the four princes who are known to us as Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. It was a long and dreadful journey that they took, for Babylon is very far from Judæa, and a wide desert lies between. And no doubt the captives were driven along rudely by the soldiers and made to suffer many things. But the most cruel suffering of all was the thought that God was displeased, and that the people had brought this punishment upon themselves by their sins. It is thought by some people that the beautiful forty-second and forty-third Psalms were written by





King Jeconiah when he saw the last of his native country from the top of Mt. Hermon, and from the hill Mizar: "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. . . . O my God, my soul is cast down within me, therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar." If he did not write it, no doubt the words came to his memory in that sad hour. We may believe that Jeconiah did repent and call upon God, for after he had been in Babylon many years the king who came after Nebuchadnezzar was kinder to him, and made him more comfortable than he had been before.

When all the best people of the country were carried away captive, Nebuchadnezzar left the poorest of the people in Judah to till the land, and made Zedekiah, the brother of Jehoiakim, and the uncle of Jeconiah, king over them. Zedekiah was to pay tribute to Nebuchadnezzar, as Jehoiakim had done.

Jeremiah was also left in Jerusalem, and for a time he was almost broken-hearted.

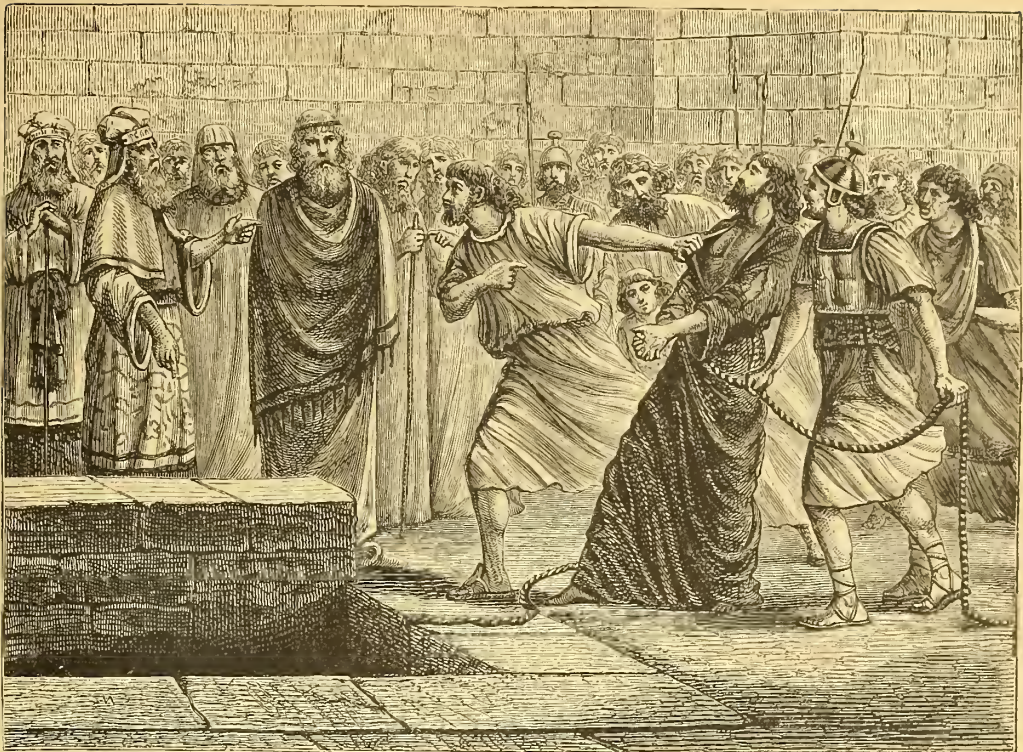


He sat among the ruins of his beloved city and lamented, wishing that his head were a fountain of tears, that he might weep day and night over the sorrows of Jerusalem. Still he did not give up trying to make his people obey the Lord. At first Zedekiah seemed to wish to do right, and Jeremiah helped him. The king called the people together and told them that in such times of trial no one ought to keep one of his own brethren, of the children of Israel, in slavery, as many of them were doing; and they all made a solemn covenant with God, and let all their slaves go free. And Jeremiah told the people that it was the will of God that they should serve the king of Babylon patiently, and not rebel against him, and that after seventy years he would

bring them all back from captivity and would give them their own land again. And Jeremiah wrote a letter to those who had been carried captive, and told them to build houses and plant vineyards in Babylon, for God wished them to stay there, and after seventy years he would bring them back again to their own land.

But it was not long before both the king and the people grew tired of obeying God. They made the slaves whom they had freed to become slaves again, and the king broke his word to Nebuchadnezzar and made a treaty with the king of Egypt, although Jeremiah warned him against it, and even Ezekiel, the prophet who had been carried to Babylon, sent word to him not to do so.

Then Nebuchadnezzar sent his army again, and they destroyed some of the cities of Judæa. Jeremiah saw that it was of no use to try to do anything more for his people, and he was going away to his own city of Anathoth when the king sent and had him arrested, and had him put in a dungeon and kept him there for many days. Then Zedekiah sent for him secretly and asked him if there was any word from the Lord, and Jeremiah answered, "There is: thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon." Jeremiah begged the king not to send him back to the dungeon, for he was sure that he should die there, and the king gave orders for him to be kept in the court of the prison. But when the nobles found that he would not say anything different from what he had said before, but always told them that it was God's will



for them to submit to the king of Babylon, they were very angry, and they carried him away to the house of one of his worst enemies and let him down into a well that was in the court. There was no water in the well, but the bottom was a deep mire, and Jeremiah sank up to his armpits in the mire.

But one of the king's slaves heard how cruelly the princes had used Jeremiah, and he told the king, and the king gave him leave to take Jeremiah out of the well. So Ebed-melech, the slave, took a guard and went and drew Jeremiah out of the well. They threw down old rags to him, that he might put them under his arms and so not be hurt by the ropes. And after that he was kept in the court of the prison until the siege of Jerusalem was over.

That was a terrible siege. There was no food, and the people suffered tortures of hunger. No other siege was ever more full of horrors, but the people held out for a year and a half. Then the walls were broken down and the army of Babylon could no longer be kept out. King Zedekiah and his soldiers tried to escape by night, but they were overtaken and caught. The sons of Zedekiah were slain before his eyes, and all the nobles were slain, and Zedekiah's eyes were put out and he was carried to Babylon. And the city of Jerusalem was burned with fire. The tombs were broken open and the dead bodies thrown to the jackals, and many people put to cruel deaths. A great many captives were carried away in chains to Babylon, and Jeremiah was

among them. But before they had gone far he was offered his choice to go or to stay, and he chose to stay with the few who were left. After a time those who were left decided to go to Egypt, and though Jeremiah advised them not to go, for it was not God's will, they would not listen to him, but made him also go with them.

While all these terrible things were happening in Judæa, the captives in Babylon were mourning for their lost country. The one hundred and thirty-seventh Psalm tells how these sad-hearted exiles felt when they found themselves so far from their homes: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down: yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's songs in a strange land!"

Jeremiah had prophesied that the great city of Babylon would some time be destroyed. He wrote this prophecy in a book, and gave it to a priest named Seraiah, and bade him, when he came to Babylon, read the book to the people and call upon God to fulfil all its words, and then drop it in the river Euphrates for a sign. The prophecy did come true, though not for many, many years.

After the city of Jerusalem was destroyed, and the people were carried away, Jeremiah wrote a poem of sorrow and mourning, for his heart was nearly broken over the sorrows of his people. The poem which he wrote is called the "Lamentations" of Jeremiah; it is in the Bible. "How doth the city sit sorrowful," he wrote, "she that was full of people!" "Her children are gone into captivity before the enemy." "Jerusalem hath grievously sinned, therefore is she removed."

We do not know whether Jeremiah died in Egypt or not. Some things that he wrote seem as if they were written in Babylon, and perhaps he went there in his old age to preach to and comfort his people.



EZEKIEL.

AMONG these captives the prophet Ezekiel, like Jeremiah in Jerusalem, tried to bring the people to submit to the will of God. Ezekiel had many wonderful visions in which he learned what God would do to his people. And just after the siege of Jerusalem was ended, the Spirit of the Lord carried him in a vision to a valley that was



filled with the dry bones of people who had long been dead: and the Spirit bade Ezekiel prophesy to these bones, and when he spoke to them in prophecy they all became living men. And thus God taught Ezekiel He could do with the kingdom of Judah: though it seemed to be entirely dead, yet when the Spirit of God came upon it it would live again. And so Ezekiel went on teaching the people that God would forgive all who were sorry for their sins, and would give a new heart to all who asked him for it. He also spoke many prophecies about the other nations, Egypt, Tyre, Ammon, and others; but the most important part of his work was to show the Jews their many sins against God, and that their captivity had come upon them as a punishment for their sin, especially in worshipping idols. And in fact the lessons of the captivity in this matter were never lost upon them. Up to this time they were constantly going after the false gods of the nations around them, but from the time they were carried away to Babylon they never worshipped any God but Jehovah.

The prophecies of Ezekiel were a great comfort and source of strength to those of the banished Jews who repented of their sins and turned to God again. Though they were far from home and scattered, yet God told them by Ezekiel that he would be as "a little sanctuary" to them in whatever country they might be, and he promised to give them a new heart and a new spirit, so that they would delight in serving him. But to those who did not repent of their sins and seek after the Lord, Ezekiel brought many terrible warnings of what would be the result of their sin. Yet amid all his warnings he never ceased to remind the Jews that God would one day bring them back to their own land: for God would not forget his people, for David's sake and for the sake of his promise to Abraham.



DANIEL.

WHEN the people of Judah were carried away captive into Babylon, there went among them four boys, who were princes, whom the king of Babylon decided to educate

to be officers in his kingdom. He therefore commanded that they should be brought into the palace, and should be fed with such food and wine as was provided for the king's table.

The names of the four boys were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; but the prince or officer who had the care of them changed their names to Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Daniel is generally called by his Hebrew name, but we know the three other children best by their Chaldean names.

Now these boys spoke to the steward, and asked that they might be given only porridge to eat and water to drink. At first the steward was afraid to do this, lest these boys should not be as strong and healthy as the other children under his care; but Daniel persuaded him to try it for three months, and at the end of that time they were so much fairer and healthier looking than the other children that he was willing to keep on. It was not because these four boys did not care for nice food that they made this request: it was because they cared most of all to please God, and would go without all nice food rather than run the risk of eating or drinking what he had forbidden. When the time came for them to be examined by the king, they were found to be wiser than any one else; and the king made them rulers over parts of his kingdom, and Daniel became one of his chief counsellors.

After this Nebuchadnezzar made a great golden image, and set it up in a plain, and he sent for all the great men to come and worship the image. When they were gathered together a herald proclaimed that when the people heard the sound of all manner of musical instruments they must fall down and worship the golden image: and whoever would not do so should be cast into a burning fiery furnace. Then the music sounded, and all the people fell down and worshipped.

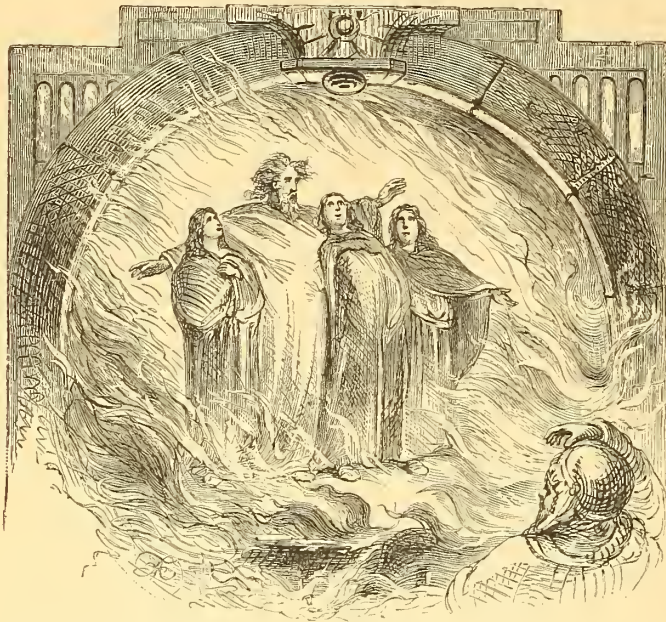
But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not fall down and worship, and some one came and told the king. Then the king sent for them, and told them that he would give them one more chance, and that if they did not then worship the image they should be cast into the burning fiery furnace. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered, "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king. But if not, be it known to thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods nor worship the image which thou hast set up."

Then the king was very angry, and he gave command that the furnace should be heated seven times hotter than before, and the three men thrown into it. And it was



done, and the fire was so hot that it killed the men who threw them in. So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego fell down in the midst of the furnace.

But while the king was looking to see them burn up, he saw something that terrified him. For though he had caused these three men, bound, to be thrown into the furnace, he now saw four men, loose, walking without harm in the midst of the fire, and the form of the fourth was so majestic and grand that he thought it must be a son of God. Then he called with a loud voice to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to come out of the fire; and they came out, and were not hurt, nor did their clothes even smell of fire. Then Nebuchadnezzar gave orders that his people should worship the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.



Now Babylon, the city whither the people of Judah had been carried captive, was the largest and most beautiful

city that ever was seen. Its palaces were very magnificent, it had hanging gardens, and a wall three hundred feet high and eighty feet wide, and the river Euphrates ran through the middle of it. Nebuchadnezzar was very proud of this city which he had done much to make beautiful. But God sent him a dream which he could not understand until Daniel interpreted it for him, and told him that it meant that because he was so proud, and did not serve God nor thank him for all the great things that he had, he should be driven out of his palace and become like a beast of the field. And so it was—for Nebuchadnezzar became crazy for a time and would not live in his palace, but lived in the fields and ate grass like the oxen, and his hair and his nails grew so long and stiff that they were like eagles' feathers and birds' claws. Then God gave him back his reason again, and he confessed that God was the true God and that all his power came from Him.

Nebuchadnezzar had a great many dreams and visions, and Daniel interpreted them, for the Spirit of God was with Daniel. After Nebuchadnezzar died his son reigned, and after him his grandson, Belshazzar. While Belshazzar was king an army came from Persia, a country east of Chaldea, and besieged Babylon; but Belshazzar thought that his city was so strong it could never be taken, and he cared little for the Persians. And one night he made a great feast to all his nobles and officers, and



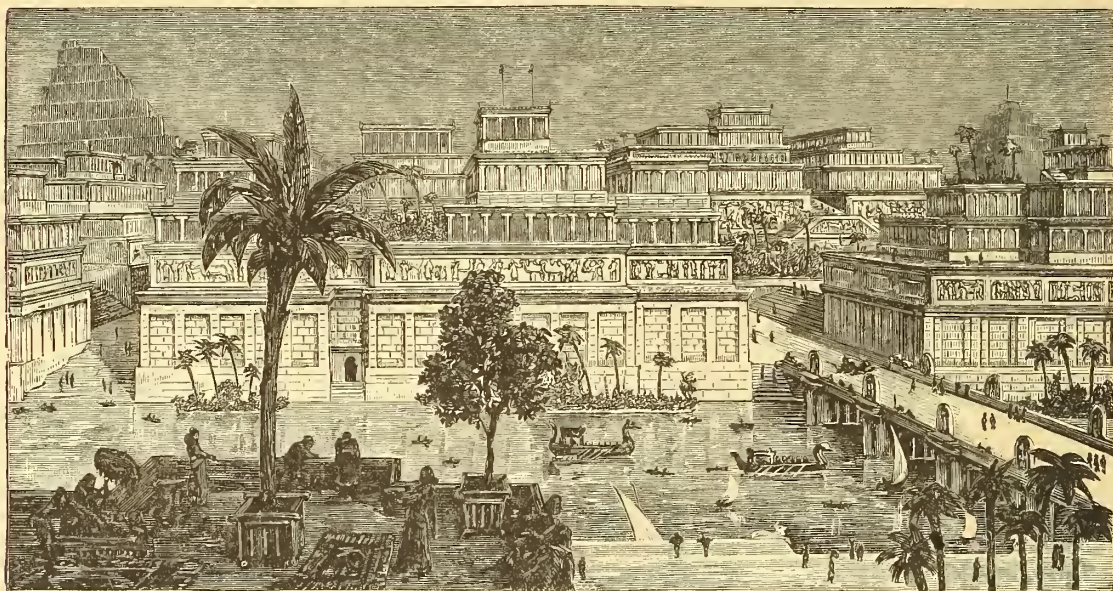
sent for all the sacred dishes that had been taken out of the temple of Jerusalem and carried to Babylon, the beautiful cups and flagons of gold that had been consecrated to God, and he and his princes and his wives drank wine out of them.

While they were making merry, and praising their gods of wood and stone, they saw the fingers of a man's hand writing on the wall opposite them some words which

they could not understand. Whose hand was it? And what was the meaning of those words? The king was so frightened that his knees smote together, and he cried out for the wise men to be sent for, that they might tell him what the words meant.

Then all the wise men came, and the king told them that whoever would read the words and tell what they meant, should be clothed in royal robes, and have a gold chain about his neck, and be the third ruler in the kingdom. But none of the wise men could read the words nor interpret them.

Then the king's mother came in and told them to send for Daniel, who had been his grandfather's chosen counsellor, and in whom the Spirit of God was. So Daniel came, and he read the words, and told the king that they meant that God had judged him for his wickedness, for He had weighed him in the balances and found him wanting; and that his kingdom should be divided and given to the Medes and Persians. And



that very night the city of Babylon was taken by the Medo-Persian army which had been besieging it, and Belshazzar was killed, and Darius the Median became king of Babylon.

Now Darius the king made Daniel one of the highest officers in his empire, for he saw how wise he was. For Darius had a hundred and twenty provinces in his empire, and he put a prince over each one, and over the princes he put three presidents, and Daniel was the first of the presidents. Then all the princes and presidents were jealous of Daniel and tried to destroy him. They knew that they could not find him doing anything wrong, but they knew too how he loved his God and served Him, and they resolved to get him into trouble on that account.

So they asked Darius to make a decree that no one should ask anything of any



god or man for thirty days, except of the king; and that whoever did should be thrown into a den of lions; and so the king made the decree and signed it. Now when Daniel knew of it, he went to his house and knelt down before an open window that looked in the direction of Jerusalem, and prayed: for it was his habit to pray looking towards Jerusalem, because he loved the memory of it so much. And this he did three times a day, as he always had done. And the princes who were watching saw him, and went and told the king. The king was very sorry he had made the law, and he tried all day to deliver Daniel; but it was the rule that the laws of the Medes and Persians could



not be changed, and the princes insisted that Daniel should be thrown to the lions. But when they were taking him there the king said to him, "Thy God, whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee." Then Daniel was thrown into the den, and a stone rolled against it so that he could not get out.

All night the king could not sleep, and early in the morning he hastened to the den of lions and called out to know if Daniel were still alive. And Daniel answered, "My God hath sent his angel and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me."

Then the king was very glad, and he gave command for the stone to be rolled away and for Daniel to be taken out of the den. And when he came out there was no hurt anywhere upon him, because he believed in his God.

But the king had those wicked men who had tried to ruin Daniel thrown into the den, and the lions killed them at once.

Daniel had many visions from God as to the things that should happen in the future, for he was very holy and very wise, and God showed him what He was going to do in time to come. At one time something was shown to Daniel which distressed him very much, so that he could not eat, and went mourning for three full weeks. Then God sent a glorious angel to comfort him; and the angel said, "O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee; be strong, yea, be strong," and told him that God heard all his prayers. It is a blessed thing to be "greatly beloved" of God.

EZRA.

THE time came at last when God's promises were to be fulfilled and the Jewish people were to return from their captivity. A great and good king came to the throne



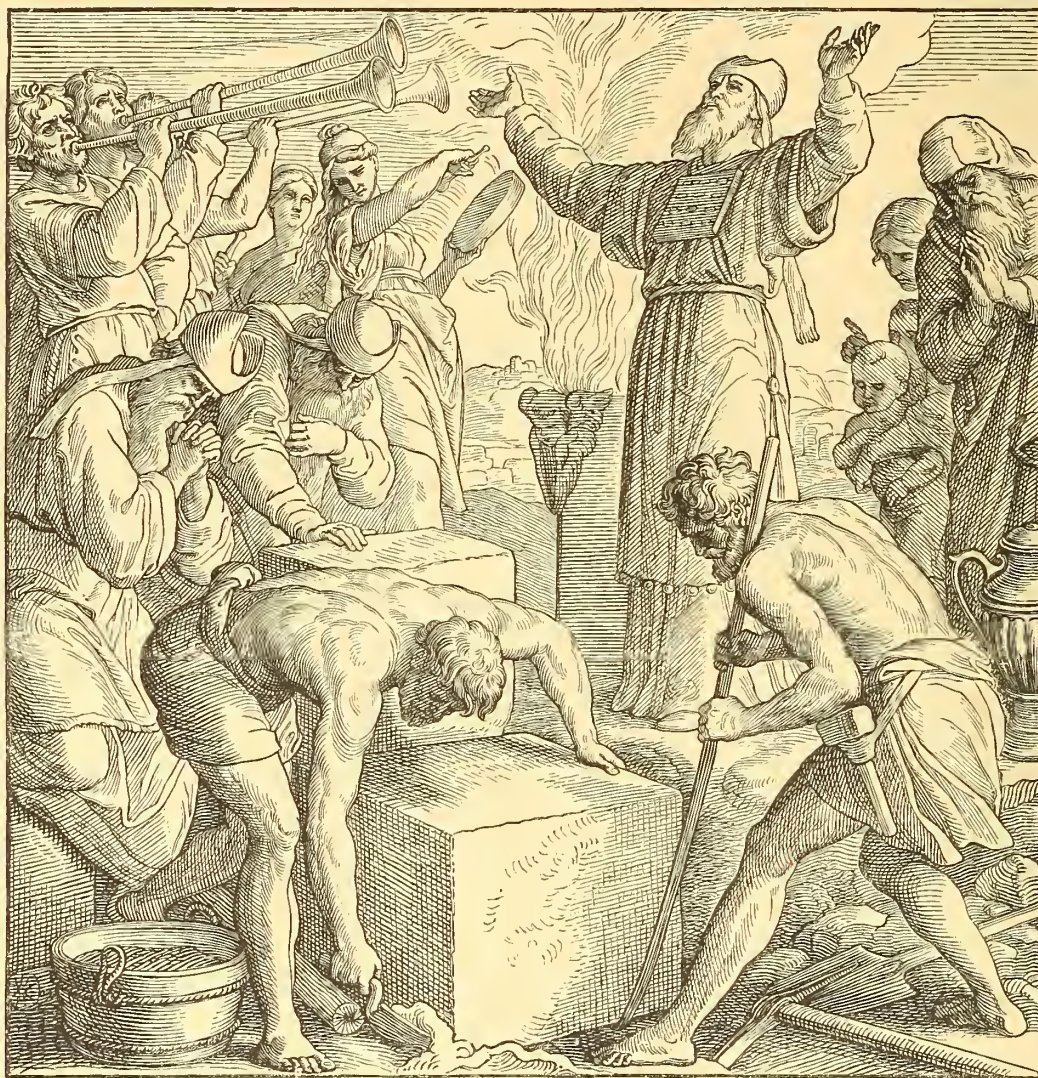
of Babylon. He was called Cyrus, and the prophets had foretold that he would cause the house of the Lord to be rebuilt. And so he gave orders that the Jews should be allowed to go back to Jerusalem, and that they should have money and timber and stones given to them as they needed, to rebuild the house of their God.

Now came a time of great joy for the people of Judah. They set forth in a great caravan to go up to Jerusalem, taking with them all the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from the temple, for Cyrus had given them all

back again. Through the four months of the long journey they were full of songs and praises and thanksgiving. One beautiful Psalm tells us that they felt as if they were in a dream. And when they reached the place where they could see the ruins of Jerusalem, their holy city, away off on her hills, they could not contain their joy.

The men who led the return were Zerubbabel, the grandson of King Jeconiah, and Joshua, the son of Josedech, who had been high-priest when the captivity began.

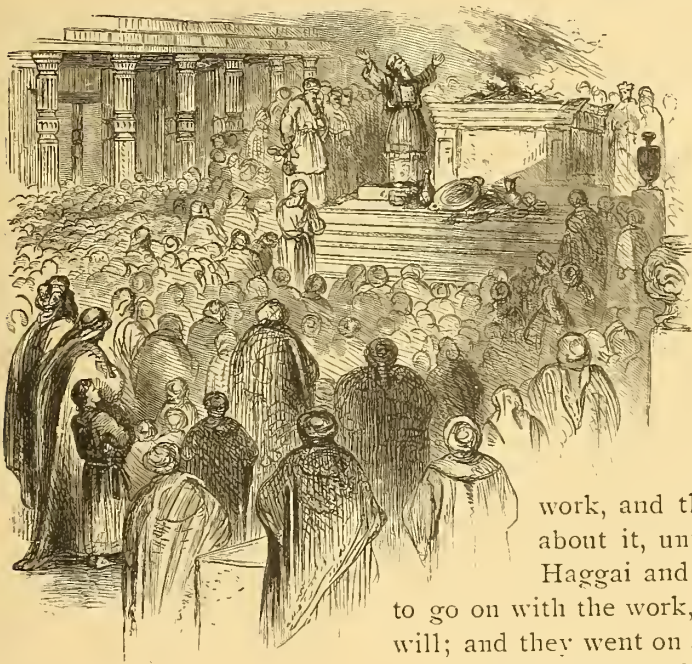
It was a year after their return before the rubbish had been removed away so that the



foundations of the new temple could be laid. When the second Feast of the Tabernacles came round the people all assembled, and the priests put on their beautiful robes, which

the Prince Zerubbabel had given them, and there was a great day of rejoicing, for the corner-stone of the new temple was laid on that day. The priests blew the silver trumpets and the people all sang, "Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever!" and the people shouted with great shouts that could be heard afar off. But some of the old men, who had seen the old temple, wept with a loud voice, for they remembered the glory of that beautiful house.

But the Samaritans who lived in the northern part of the country, where the kingdom of Israel had once been, did not want the temple to be built. They were a mixed people, descended partly from Israelites and partly from people who had been



sent there from Assyria, and they were suspicious of the Jews. They went to the governor of the country with complaints, and wrote a letter to the king, and got him to command that the work should stop. So for twelve years there was no more work done upon the temple: but after that a new king came to the throne, and he allowed the work to go on. The people had been discouraged by having been stopped in their

work, and they did not want to do anything about it, until the Lord sent two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, and encouraged them to go on with the work, and told them that it was God's will; and they went on and built the temple.

It was finished after four years, and at the time of the Passover, in the early spring, it was dedicated. There was first a solemn sacrifice of hundreds of oxen and sheep and lambs, and twelve goats, one to represent each of the twelve tribes, for though not all the tribes were there, yet they felt that all of the children of Israel, wherever they might be, had a right in the temple and in the blessing of God. And after this solemn service there was a time of feasting and joy.

The new temple was very large and very fine, but it was not so rich as the temple of Solomon, for there was not so much gold and silver about it. And the Holy of holies was empty, for the ark had not been carried away with the other treasures of the temple. No one knows what became of it, though some of the Jews think that Jeremiah buried it, that the heathen should not get hold of it. But though the ark might be gone, God was with his people. He had saved them out of the hands of their enemies, and their hearts were full of joy and praise.



After sixty years, however, word came to Babylon that the temple was much out of repair and that the worship of God was being neglected. Then a priest named Ezra went from Babylon to Jerusalem to repair the temple and restore the worship of God. It was Ezra's strong desire that the laws given by Moses should be strictly kept, and he encouraged many people to become scribes, or writers, to make copies of the law given by Moses, and to explain it to the people.

NEHEMIAH.

ABOUT twenty years after Ezra went to restore the temple service there was living in the court of Persia a young Jew named Nehemiah. One day one of his brothers, who had been living in Jerusalem, came to see him, and Nehemiah asked about the Holy City, and his brother told him that the walls of the city were broken down and that the people were much troubled by their enemies. At this Nehemiah was much cast down, and the more he thought of it the more unhappy he became, until at last he resolved to do what he could to help it.

Now Nehemiah was the king's cupbearer, and one day when he went to wait upon the king, both the king and queen noticed how sad he was, and they asked him what was the matter. Then Nehemiah prayed in his heart that God would guide him to say the right thing,



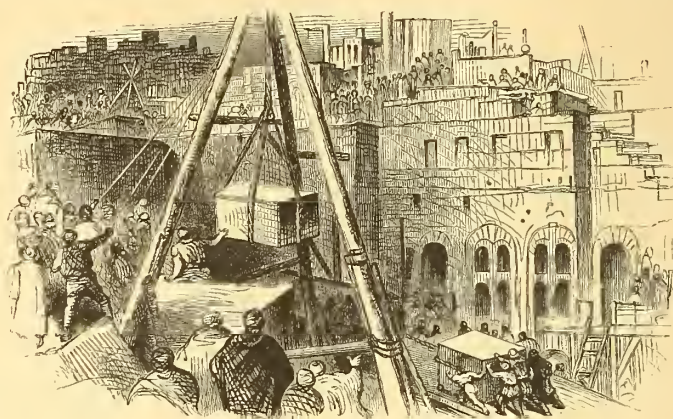
and he told the king about the troubles at Jerusalem, and asked that he might go and rebuild the wall. And the king told him to go: and he made him *tirshatha*, that is governor, of Jerusalem, and gave him orders for all the timber and stones that he might need. So Nehemiah went to Jerusalem, and the king sent some soldiers to see that he got there safely.

After he had been in Jerusalem three days, he went out by night, with a few of his men, to look at the wall, and he found it all broken down, and the rubbish heaped up so high in some places that he could hardly get by. When he had seen it all he called the rulers and elders and princes together, and told them that he had come to rebuild the wall. He told them, too, how good God had been to him in putting it into the king's heart to let him come; and they all said, "Let us rise up and build." And all the people of Jerusalem went to work with a will to rebuild the wall.

There were some of the king's officers in Jerusalem, Sanballat and Tobiah and Geshem, who were not of the people of Israel, and they laughed Nehemiah to scorn. But Nehemiah was not afraid of them: he told them that his God was on his side

and would protect him and his people, and that they would repair the wall. Nehemiah divided the work into portions, and gave each part into the hands of a certain set of men, with rulers over them to superintend. In one place the priests built, and in another the men of Jericho, and in another the goldsmiths, and in another the Nethinim, who had the charge of work about the temple. And every man who lived near the wall worked opposite his own house.

Then Sanballat and Tobiah and Geshem came again and jeered at Nehemiah, and tried to discourage the people, and they said that the wall was built so badly that if a jackal should run over it he would break it down. So Nehemiah prayed to God to help him, and he would not give up the work. And when he heard that they had made a plan to gather the people who lived on the borders of Judæa, to come and fight against the Jews and stop their work, Nehemiah bade the people gird on their swords and be ready to fight, but not to stop working. All day long Nehemiah went from place to place keeping watch, and a man with a trumpet beside him, and he bade the people all listen for the trumpet,



and wherever they heard it, to go in that direction to help fight. The people were often much discouraged because there was so much rubbish to clear away, the wall being in such a ruined state, and it was such slow work, when they had constantly to keep a lookout for the enemy and keep their weapons at hand. But Nehemiah encouraged them all the time, telling them that God would fight for them, and that he would prosper their work. When they remembered that, they would cheer up again. Half the people kept guard every night and half slept. But Nehemiah and his men never took off their clothes nor took regular rest until the work was done.

When Sanballat and Tobiah and Geshem saw that, and found that they could not frighten Nehemiah and his people, they sent word to Nehemiah, asking him to meet them in a certain village to talk things over, thinking thus to do him harm. But Nehemiah sent back word to them, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down:" but his heart was heavy with all these troubles, and he prayed constantly to God to help him. And God brought all the plans of his enemies to naught, and at the end of fifty-two days of hard work the wall was built, and the people celebrated it with a great festival. Ezra, the scribe, read the book of the law to them, and they mourned because they had forgotten God's laws, and promised to keep them.

ESTHER.

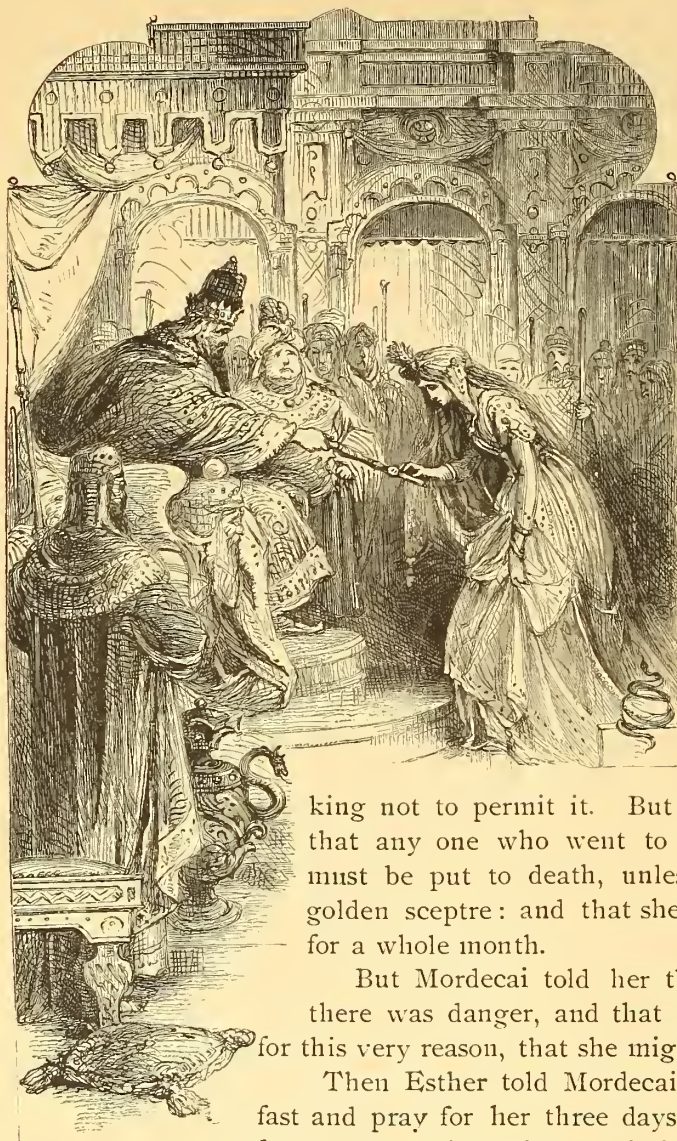
THERE was a king of Persia named Ahasuerus, who made a great feast for all his princes. On the seventh day of the feast, when the king had drunk a great deal of wine, he sent for his queen, Vashti, to come and show herself to the people, for she was very beautiful. But Vashti would not come. Then the king was very angry, and he said that Vashti should be queen no more. After a time he gave orders that all the beautiful young girls in his kingdom should be brought to his palace, that he might choose the one he liked best for his queen.



Now there was a Jew named Mordecai, who had an orphan cousin, whom he was bringing up. She, too, was taken to the king's palace, and when the king saw her he loved her, and chose her to be queen. Mordecai had told her not to tell any of her friends when she went to the palace, and as the king changed her Jewish name of Hadassah to the Persian name, Esther, no one knew that the new queen was a Jewess. But after Esther was made queen Mordecai went every day and sat in the gate of the palace, that he might know how Esther was getting on. And one day as he sat there he heard two of the king's servants plotting against the king, and he told Esther of it, and she warned the king, and the whole plot was defeated.

Now the king had a great favorite, named Haman, and every one bowed down to him when he passed through the





gate of the palace. But Mordecai would not bow to Haman, for he belonged to a people that always hated the Jews, and Haman resolved to revenge himself on Mordecai by killing all the Jews in the entire kingdom.

So he told the king that there were some people in his kingdom who kept other laws than those of the country, and as that was unsafe they ought all to be killed. And the king told him he might do as he pleased about it. Then Haman gave orders that on a certain day all the Jews in the kingdom should be killed.

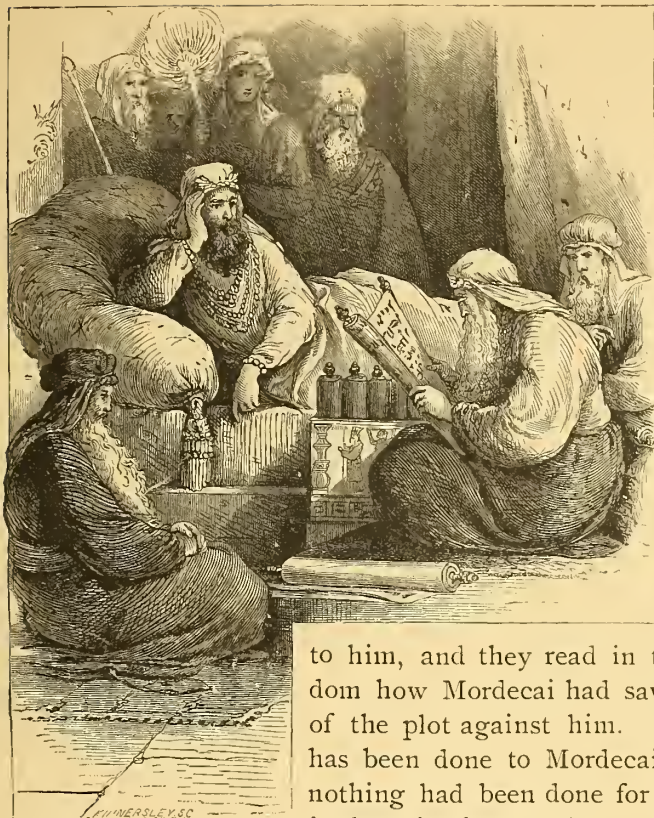
When the Jews heard this there was great mourning, and Mordecai came and told Esther that she must go and beg the

king not to permit it. But Esther said that there was a law that any one who went to the king without being sent for must be put to death, unless the king should hold out his golden sceptre: and that she had not been sent for to the king for a whole month.

But Mordecai told her that she ought to do this, even if there was danger, and that perhaps God had made her queen for this very reason, that she might save her people.

Then Esther told Mordecai to call all the Jews together, to fast and pray for her three days, and she and her maidens would fast and pray three days, and then she would go to the king, and perish or not, as God willed.

When the three days' fast was over Esther put on her royal robes and went to the king, and when the king saw her he held out the sceptre. Then Esther drew near and touched the top of the sceptre, and the king asked her what she wanted. Esther did not say what she wanted: she only asked the king if he would come to a banquet that she had prepared, and bring Haman. So the king sent for Haman, and they went to the banquet; but Esther did not make her request then: she asked the king and Haman to come again the next day, and she would make her request.



Haman was very proud of being asked twice to the queen's banquet, and he went home and boasted of it to his friends. Yet he said all this was nothing, so long as he saw Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate. Then Haman's wife advised him to have a high gallows made that night, and the next day to ask the king to have Mordecai hanged on it: then he could go merrily to the banquet. And this pleased Haman, and he had a gallows made seventy-five feet high.

Now that night the king could not sleep, and he called for some one to come and read

to him, and they read in the book of Chronicles of the kingdom how Mordecai had saved the king's life by warning him of the plot against him. Then the king asked, "What honor has been done to Mordecai for this?" and they told him that nothing had been done for him. Then the king said, "Who is there in the court?" Now Haman had come as early as pos-

sible, to ask the king to have Mordecai hanged. So they said, "Haman is in the court." And the king gave orders to call him, and when he came in the king said, "What shall be done to the man whom the king delights to honor?"

Now Haman thought that there was no man whom the king would like to honor so much as himself, and he answered, "Let him be clothed in royal apparel and set upon the king's horse, and the king's crown on his head, and let one of the most noble princes lead him through the city and proclaim, 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor.'"

Then the king said, "Make haste and do so to Mordecai the Jew." Haman dared not disobey the king: but when he



had led Mordecai in triumph through the streets he went home very much cast down.

When the time came for the banquet Haman went in with the king, and after they had eaten, the king asked Esther what her request was.

Then Esther said that she asked for her life and for the lives of all her people, for they were all going to be destroyed. And the king was very angry, and asked who would dare do such a thing. And Esther replied that it was Haman who was going to do it. Then the king was so angry that he rose up from the table and went out into the garden to collect himself, and Haman fell down on his knees before the couch on which Esther reclined at table. But the king, coming in, gave orders to have him seized and put to death. And some one told him of the gallows which Haman had built for Mordecai, and the king said, "Hang him thereon." So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. And the Jewish people were saved from death, and Mordecai was put in Haman's place in the kingdom.



Then Mordecai sent messengers through all the kingdom to bid the Jews celebrate their deliverance by a joyful feast. From that time even to the present day the Jews every year keep two days of "feasting and joy, and sending portions one to another and of gifts to the poor," in memory of this great deliverance. Very devout Jews keep also a fast on the day before this feast, in memory of Esther's fast, and on the morning of the first feast-day they all go to the synagogue and have a solemn service. These yearly feasts are like the links of a long chain, that run back to the very event they celebrate, and prove that it really occurred.

THE GOSPELS.

MORE than four hundred years had passed away since the Jews returned from their captivity, and they were looking for the promise of God to be kept, and for the Saviour to be born whom God had promised to Eve in Eden and whom the prophets had prophesied about.

One day the people were all gathered in the temple courts at Jerusalem. It was the hour of the daily sacrifice, when a priest always went into the Holy Place to burn incense upon the altar, while all the people were praying to God outside. The priest who went into the Holy Place on this day was a very good man, named Zacharias. He was very old, and he had never had a child, though he had often prayed for one. While he was



standing before the altar burning incense, an angel appeared to him, and told him that his prayer was heard, and his wife Elisabeth should have a son, called John, who should be very great in the sight of the Lord, and who should prepare the way for the Saviour. Zacharias could not believe such good news, and the angel told him that he should be dumb and not able to speak until his little son was born.

The people wondered what kept Zacharias in the temple so long, and they wondered still more when he came out and could not speak.

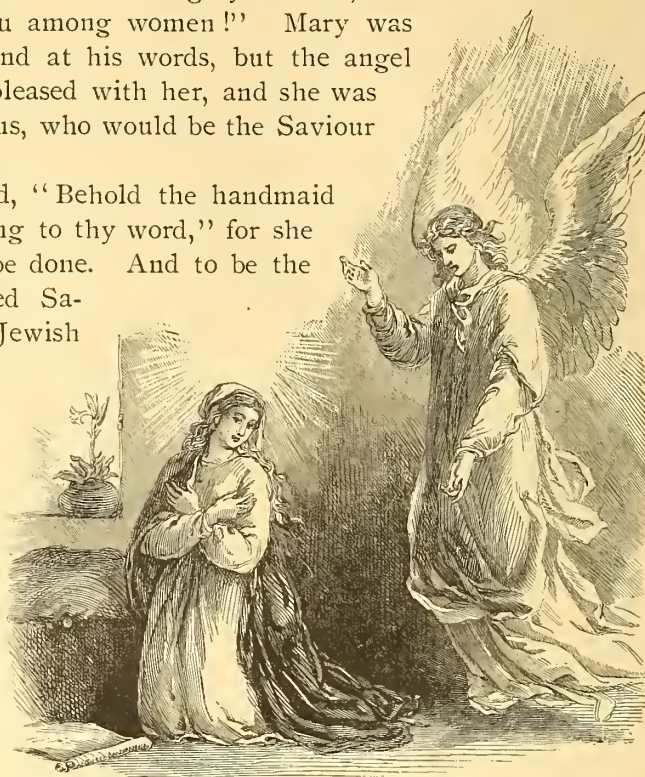
As soon as the two weeks of his duty in the temple were over he hastened home to his wife. He could

not speak to her, but he could write; and no doubt he told her of all that had happened, and the good news that they were to have a son.

Not long after this the angel was again sent down to this world with good news. There was a very good young woman named Mary, who lived in a village called Nazareth, in Galilee, the northern part of Palestine. One day as she was praying, a bright angel appeared to her and said, "Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women!" Mary was startled at the sight of the angel and at his words, but the angel told her not to fear, for God was pleased with her, and she was to be the mother of a son, called Jesus, who would be the Saviour of the world.

When Mary heard this she said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word," for she loved God and wished his will to be done. And to be the mother of the Messiah, or promised Saviour, was an honor for which every Jewish woman longed.

When the angel was gone Mary set out to go and see her cousin Elisabeth, for the wife of Zacharias was Mary's cousin. Elisabeth lived a long way off, but the angel had told Mary that Elisabeth was also to have a son, who was to be a great prophet, and was to prepare the way for the Saviour in the hearts of the people, and Mary wanted very much to talk over all these wonderful things with her.



It was a long journey from Nazareth in Galilee to the hill country of Judæa, where Zacharias and Elisabeth lived, and Mary probably had to walk all the way, for there was no other way to travel in those days, except to ride upon an ass, and Mary was a poor young woman and probably had no means of riding. But she had so much to think of that the way did not seem long to her. It was such a wonderful thing that she should have been chosen to be the mother of the Lord! All the promises of God which she had read in the Old Testament, all that the prophets had prophesied and that the psalmists had sung about the Messiah, the Anointed One, who was to come to save his people, must have crowded into her mind and have kept her thoughts very busy. And how often she must have lifted her heart in prayer to God for grace to be a true mother to the Holy Child who was to come. So she hardly felt the weariness of the journey as she hastened to see her cousin Elisabeth.



When she reached the home of her cousin, Elisabeth broke out into loud thanksgiving, and blessed Mary, for she knew that Mary would be the mother of the Saviour. Then Mary sang a beautiful hymn: very much such a hymn as Hannah had sung when little Samuel was born, but more joyful, because she could foresee something of the blessing which was coming into the world by the son whom God was going to give her.

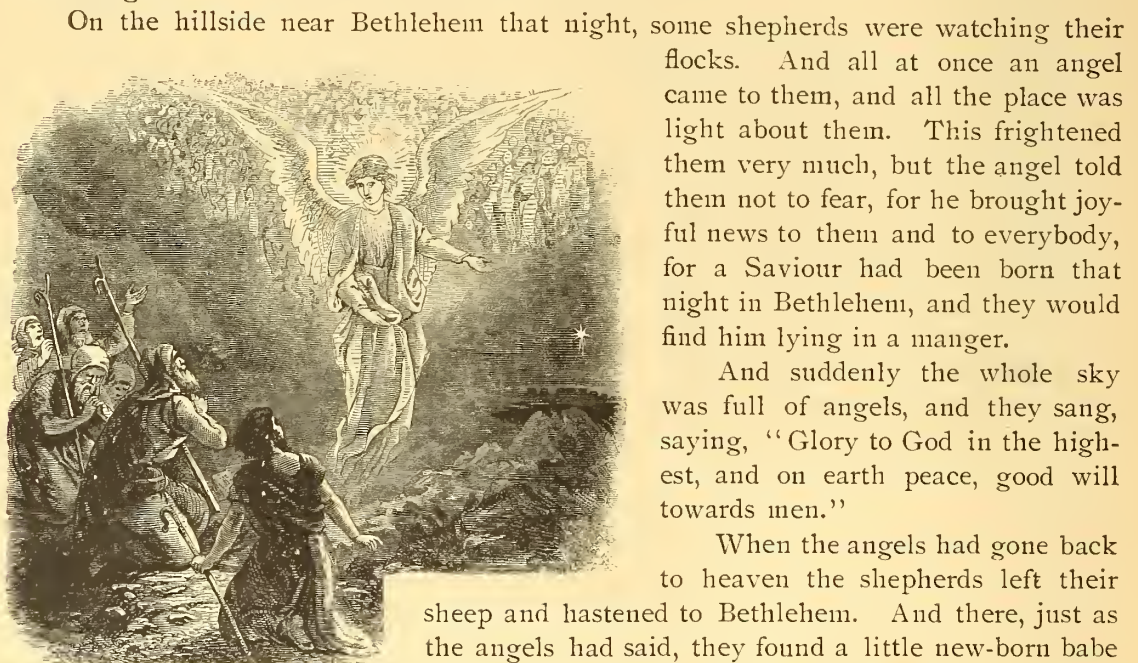
Mary stayed three months with Elisabeth, and they talked much together, no doubt, of the children whom God had promised them, and of the blessing which would come to the world through them.

Not long after Mary had gone back to her home Elisabeth had a little boy. The neighbors and friends came together and wanted to name it Zacharias, after his father; but the mother said it must be called John. Then they made signs to his father to ask how he should be called, and the father wrote, "His name is John." And as soon as he had written this he was able to speak, and he sang a song of praise to God.

And the child grew up to be a man, and when he was grown he went and lived

alone by himself in the desert thinking of God and praying to him and being taught by his Holy Spirit.

Now Mary was engaged to be married to a good man named Joseph, and after she came back from her visit to Elisabeth, Joseph took her to be his wife. Not long after that he was obliged to go to Bethlehem, the city of David, which is not far from Jerusalem, and he took Mary with him. When they came to Bethlehem they found the town very crowded, and there was no room for them in the place where travellers used to stay. There were no hotels in those days, only a long, low, empty building near the entrance of the town for travellers to stop in. As even this place was full, Joseph and Mary made a place for themselves in a sort of cave, where the asses and camels were kept. And while they were there God sent Mary her little son: and when she had put on him the wrappings that babies wore in those days, she laid him in a manger.



On the hillside near Bethlehem that night, some shepherds were watching their flocks. And all at once an angel came to them, and all the place was light about them. This frightened them very much, but the angel told them not to fear, for he brought joyful news to them and to everybody, for a Saviour had been born that night in Bethlehem, and they would find him lying in a manger.

And suddenly the whole sky was full of angels, and they sang, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men."

When the angels had gone back to heaven the shepherds left their

sheep and hastened to Bethlehem. And there, just as the angels had said, they found a little new-born babe lying in the manger. And they praised God, and gave

thanks to him for sending a Saviour. And when they had gone away they told everybody of the wonderful thing that had happened. And every one wondered at what the shepherds told them.

At this time nearly all the Jews were expecting that their Messiah, or Saviour, would come to them before long, and the shepherds' strange story must have made them wonder if this were not he. But they were not looking for one who would save them from sin, but for one who would save them from their enemies, and be their king and rule over them and fight their battles, as David had done. And so they could not believe that this baby, who had come so humbly into the world, without even a home

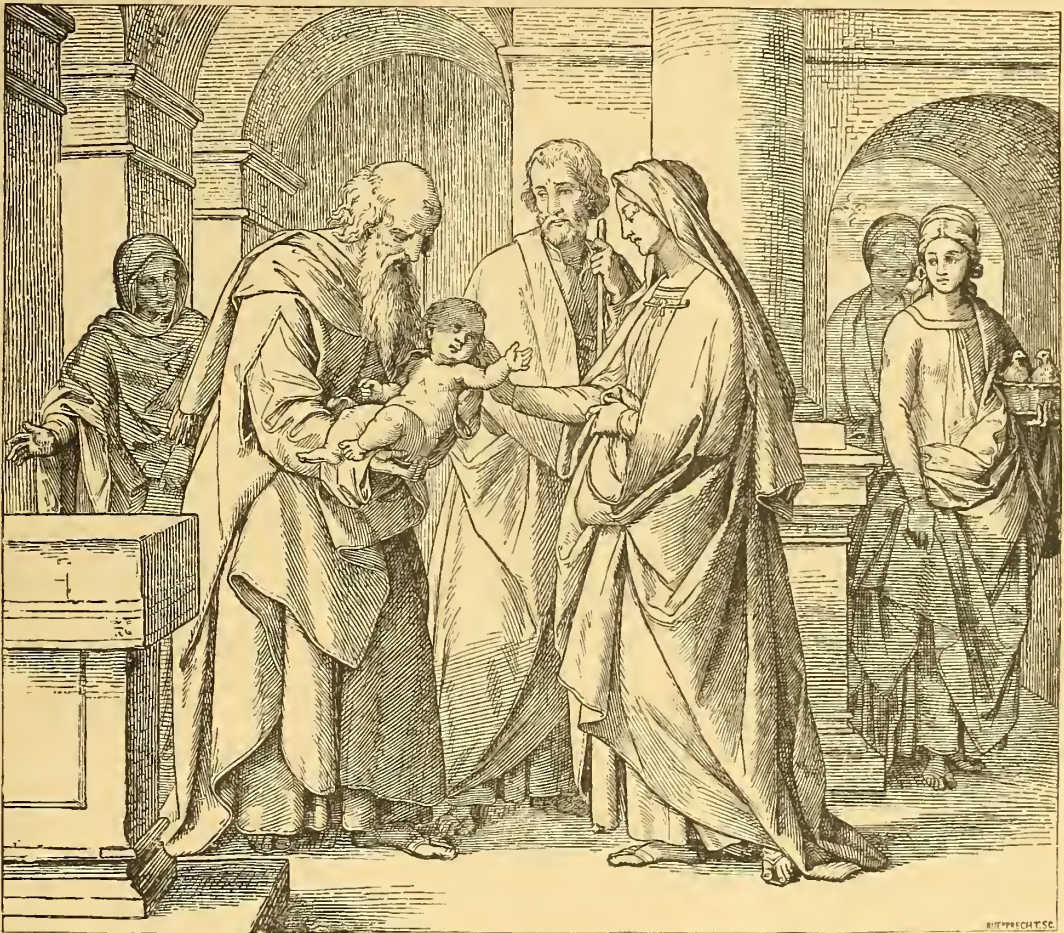


of his own, or a cradle in which he could be rocked to sleep, could be the great prince for whom they were looking. So after a few days of talk and wonder they forgot it all. But Mary remembered all these things and thought about them very much in her heart.



The baby whom God had thus sent to Mary was named Jesus, for Jesus means Saviour, and the angel had told Mary to give it that name. When Jesus was six weeks old Mary and Joseph carried him up to Jerusalem, to present him before the high-priest, for it was the law that every first-born son should be presented in the temple. They took a pair of turtle-doves with them for an offering, for they were too poor to offer a

lamb. And so they went up to Jerusalem, Mary probably riding upon an ass, with the baby in her arms, and Joseph walking beside them; and they carried the child Jesus into the temple and presented him before the high-priest.



Now there was an old man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was a very holy man, and he spent much of his time in prayer to God. And he was all the time expecting to see the Saviour, for God had told him, in his heart, that he should not die until he had seen the Lord's Anointed. While Joseph and Mary and the child Jesus were in the temple, the Spirit of God moved him to go there also. Then when he saw the little child he took him up in his arms and blessed God, and said that now he was ready to die, because he had seen the salvation of God.

Joseph and Mary wondered to hear him, and then Simeon blessed Mary too, and told her that her child would be the Saviour of many, but that he would have many trials, and that a sword would pierce through her heart too. Up to that time, proba-

bly, Mary had not dreamed that her son's life was to be a life of sorrows. She did not yet understand what it meant to save a wicked world from sin.

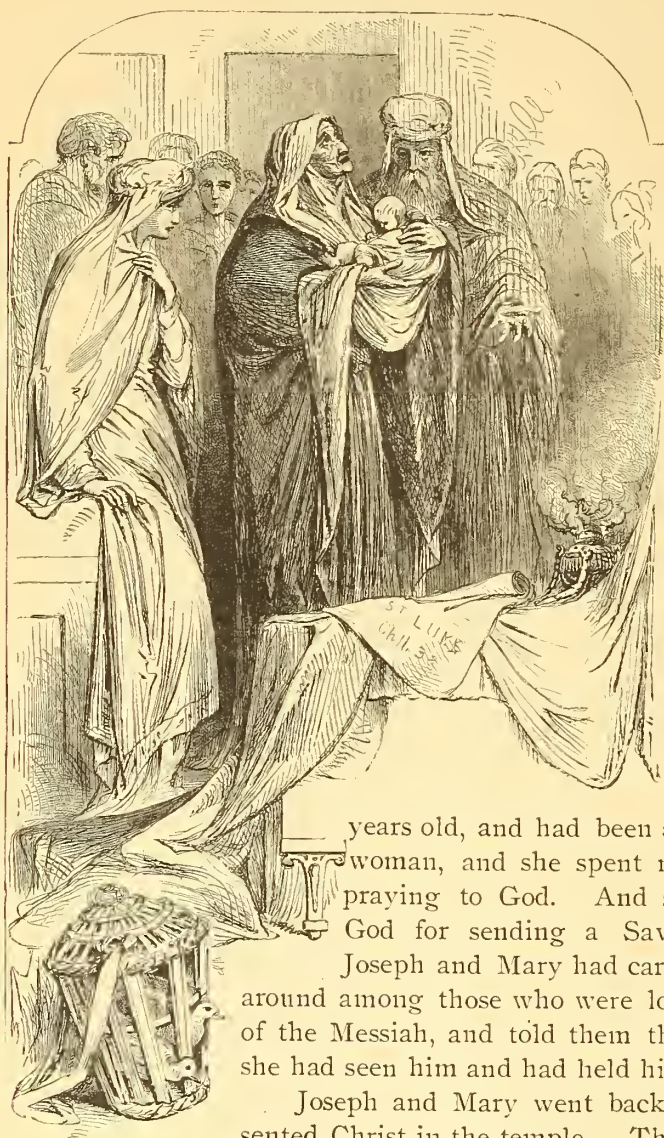
How many, many mothers had brought their little ones up to present them to God in the long years since God had said that some day a child should be born who would

grow up to do wonderful works and destroy the power of Satan! And how many of these mothers had hoped perhaps it might be their little child who was to be chosen by God for this great work! But now Mary did not need to wish for such a thing, for God had said it surely should be this one, and there had been many signs to show that he was the "wonderful" child. And God was going to show by more strange things what would come to pass. He was going to open the eyes of many people to see in this little babe the Saviour of the world. Shepherds had visited him, Simeon had blessed him, and now some one else was to proclaim him the Messiah.

While they were still in the temple a very old woman came in. She was more than eighty

years old, and had been a widow ever since she was a young woman, and she spent nearly all the time in the temple, praying to God. And she, too, gave thanks and blessed God for sending a Saviour into the world. And after Joseph and Mary had carried the little baby away, she went around among those who were longing and praying for the coming of the Messiah, and told them that the Saviour was born, and that she had seen him and had held him in her arms.

Joseph and Mary went back to Bethlehem after they had presented Christ in the temple. They probably intended to live there, for they knew that the prophets had said that the Messiah would come out of Bethlehem. It was the city of David, too, and the Messiah was very often spoken of as the Son of David. They therefore thought that there could be no place so good as Bethlehem in which to live and bring up the child Jesus. Probably Joseph intended to





find work there at his trade, for he was a carpenter, and they hoped to make a pleasant little home for themselves in time. But God had another plan for them.

About this time something happened which set all the people in Jerusalem to wondering. A party of travellers came from a far country. They were wise and learned men, and probably very rich also: but it was not their riches nor their wisdom nor their learning which stirred up the people. It was a question which they asked. "Where," said they, "is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him."

Now the Jews had a king at that time named Herod, a very bad man, who had done many dreadful deeds. He was not a Jew, but an Idumean, or descendant of Esau, and he was reigning over them under the authority of the Roman emperor. And when Herod heard what the wise men said, he was troubled, for he did not want any one but himself to be king; and all the people in Jerusalem were troubled too, for Herod had done so many horrible things already, killing everybody, even his own sons, when they came between him and his own wishes, that everybody feared that he would do some fearful deed, if it were really true that the Messiah had been born.

Herod knew that it was from the Bible—that is, the Old Testament, which was all of the Bible which had yet been written—that the people had got their belief that the Messiah was coming, and that all that could be known about him was to be learned from that book. So he sent for the priests and the scribes, whose business it was to know the Bible well, and he asked them what the Bible said as to where the Christ, the Lord's Anointed one, should be born. They told him that the prophets had foretold that he would be born in Bethlehem. So Herod sent for the wise men, and told them to go to Bethlehem and look for the child, and when they had found him to bring him word, that he might go and worship him too. But Herod did not really mean to worship the child Jesus; he meant to kill him.

Then the wise men set out, and behold! the star which they had seen when in the East showed itself again, and it went before them till it stood over the place where the young child was. Then the wise men rejoiced with exceeding great joy, and they went in, and saw the child and his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him, and gave him rich gifts of gold and incense and myrrh. But they did not go back and tell Herod where the child Jesus was, for God warned them in a dream not to do so, and they went back to their own country by another way.

When they were gone, an angel came and spoke to Joseph in a dream, and told him



to get up and take the young child and his mother and go to Egypt, for Herod would try to kill the child. Then Joseph got up, and took the young child and his mother, while it was still night, and set out to go to Egypt.

When Herod found that the wise men were not coming back to tell him where the new-born king of the Jews was to be found he was very angry, and he sent his

soldiers to Bethlehem and told them to kill every boy-child of two years old or under whom they could find in the town. For in that way, he thought, he would surely kill Jesus. He did not know that Jesus and his mother were far on their way towards Egypt.

It was not long after this that Herod died, and as soon as the news of his death came to Egypt Joseph set out to take Mary and Jesus back to Palestine. It was again his wish to live in Bethlehem. But God told him in a dream not to go to Bethlehem, and he therefore went on to his old home in Nazareth, which was in the northern part of Palestine called Galilee.

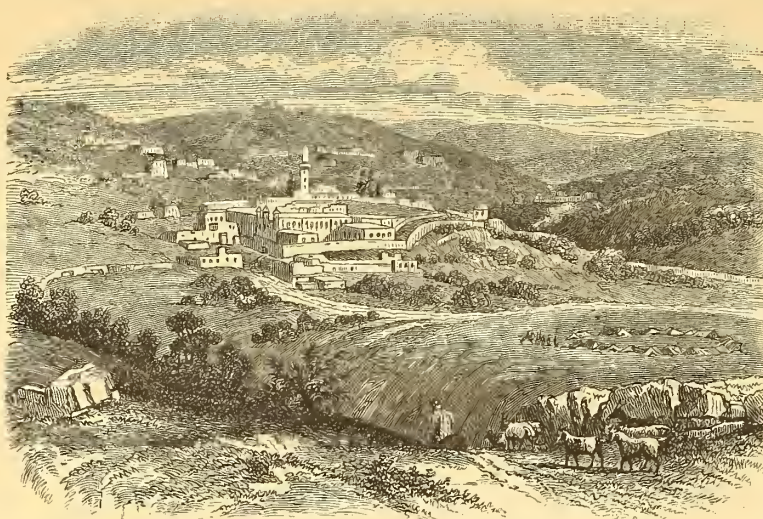
There Jesus lived quietly with his parents, who were working people, but wise and good, as we know. When Jesus was twelve years old his parents took him up to Jerusalem to the feast of the Passover: for after boys were twelve years old they were expected to go at least once in three years. They went up on foot, though perhaps Mary rode on an ass, and a great company of their neighbors went too; and as they went along they were joined by people from the towns through which they passed, all going up to the feast, until at last they were a very large party.

When the feast was over, they all set out for home together. Joseph and Mary did



not see Jesus when they started, but they thought he was with some of their friends, until night came and they camped for rest; then Jesus was not to be found. Very much troubled, Mary and Joseph turned back as soon as it was day, and reached Jerusalem that night, but without hearing anything of their boy on the way. But the next day they found him. He was in the temple, sitting among the wise men and teachers of the law, or Rabbis, listening to their talk and asking them questions. And every one who heard him was surprised at the questions he asked.

When his mother saw him she reproved him gently, saying that Joseph and she had been looking for him in sorrow. But he said, "Why did you look for me? Did you not know that I would be in my Father's house, and thinking about him?" By his Father he meant God, for Joseph was not his real father, although he called him so. But he went back with his mother and Joseph to Nazareth, and lived there, obedient to them, till he was thirty years old. And Mary remembered all these things and thought much about them.



While Jesus was growing thus to manhood, in his humble home at Nazareth, surrounded by the brothers and sisters who had been born to his parents after their return from Egypt, John, that cousin of Jesus who had been born a few months before him, was living in the desert. But when he was thirty years old he came out of the desert and began to call to the people, "Prepare ye the

way of the Lord; make his paths straight!" By this he meant that the Christ, the Saviour, was coming, and that people should get ready to receive him.

Now John did not dress like other men: he wore a rough hair-cloth garment and a leather girdle, or belt, and he ate locusts and wild honey such as he had lived on in the wilderness. When he appeared thus suddenly out of the desert, crying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord!" the people went out in crowds to see and hear what sort of a man he was. Then he preached to them, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And when the people heard him preach, a great many of them were sorry for their sins; and when John saw that they had repented, he baptized them in the river Jordan, near which he was preaching. And the people flocked more and more to hear him: the rich and the poor, the soldiers and the teachers of the law, all sorts of men and women came and were baptized.



When Jesus heard that John was preaching and baptizing at the Jordan, he left his home in Nazareth and went to John, and asked him to baptize him. At first John refused, for he said that he needed to be baptized by Jesus, rather than Jesus by him, for that Jesus was holier than he. But Jesus asked him again to baptize him, and John did so. And when Jesus was baptized, behold, the skies opened, and the Spirit of God came down like a dove and rested on his head, and a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Thus was Jesus anointed to be the Christ, the Saviour of the world. John had not known before that Jesus was to be the Saviour, although he knew how very good he was; but when he saw the Spirit descend upon him he knew and bore witness that Jesus was the Son of God.

Then the Spirit bade Jesus go away into the wilderness; and for forty days he stayed alone in the wilderness, amid the wild beasts, struggling against the temptations of the devil. But he did not yield to any of them; and at last the devil left him, and angels came and ministered to him.

When he came out of the wilderness, at the end of that dreadful time, he went back to the Jordan, where John was. And when John saw him he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" There were two men of those who heard him who had been the disciples, or pupils and followers, of John. When they heard John speak thus they went and joined themselves to Jesus. Their names were Andrew and John. Andrew soon went and brought his brother, Simon Peter, to Jesus, and perhaps John brought his brother, James. And two other men, Philip and Nathanael, also came to be with Jesus, to be his disciples and learn of him. They all went back to Galilee together.

But when the time for the next Passover came, Jesus and his disciples went up to Jerusalem. And while he was there he said and did many things which were enough to show the rulers of the people, the scribes and Pharisees, that he was indeed the Saviour; but they did not believe in him, for he was not such a Saviour as they were hoping for. Alas, they needed a Redeemer who could save them from their sins, far more than a king who could free them from the Roman yoke. They were a proud-



spirited race. They remembered the heroic deeds of their fathers, and the many wonders God had wrought in their behalf in ages past; and they flattered themselves that they were still his favorite people and he would deliver them. "We are Abraham's seed," they said, but they added, "we were never in bondage to any man"—which was not true at all: the nation had often been in bondage to other nations, and was now subject to the Romans. And worse still, Christ told them that they were the slaves of sin, and that is the most terrible slavery of all. They had forfeited the favor of God, and were fast filling up the measure of their iniquities; their fathers had refused to heed the prophets whom God had sent to warn and entreat them, and now they were bent on rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ, their own promised Messiah. He came unto

his own, and they received him not. They would even crucify him, and in a few years their city would be destroyed.

But there was one ruler, named Nicodemus, who was struck by what Jesus said and did, and he came to Jesus by night and asked him many questions. And Jesus told him that unless a man was born again, that is, received a new nature from God, he could not see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus could not understand Jesus at first, although he was himself a teacher of the law of God, but he finally believed from what Christ said that He was indeed the Saviour; yet he dared not say so openly, for he was not brave. He was the secret disciple of Jesus from this time, but as he dared not openly join himself to him, he missed what the other disciples had. That is, he missed the constant love and teaching of his Master; he had not the happiness of living always with him and hearing him talk and seeing his wondrous works.



Now when the time came for Jesus to go back to Galilee with his disciples, they decided to go by way of Samaria, which was the nearest way. People did not often travel from Galilee to Judæa by way of Samaria, for the Samaritans and the Jews had long hated each other. Ever since that time, hundreds of years before, when the Jews had come back from captivity, there had been ill-will between them: so that the Jews never went through Samaria if they could help it, and they would never ask any favors of Samaritans nor have anything to say to them. But Jesus had a reason for going. As they went on their journey they came to the city of Shechem, and Jesus, being



weary with his journey, sat down beside the well which was outside the city, while his disciples went to buy food. Presently a woman came to draw water, and Jesus asked her to give him to drink. The woman was surprised at this, for she saw that he was a Jew, But Jesus talked with her, and told her such high and holy things that she

felt that he must be a prophet—perhaps even the Christ—and she went and called the people of the city to come and hear him. And they came, and begged him to go into their city and teach them; and very many of the people believed on him.

Then Jesus and his disciples went on to Galilee, and the disciples went back to their homes and their work, for they were poor working men. For a time Jesus went around alone, preaching the good news of the kingdom of God. But after a time he came back to the towns beside the Sea of Galilee, where his disciples lived, and found James and John and Andrew and Peter fishing. Jesus asked Peter and Andrew to take him into their boat, and he sat down and taught the people out of the boat, for they all flocked upon the shore to hear him. And after he had taught them, he told



Peter to row out into deep water and let down his nets. Peter said that they had been toiling all night and had caught nothing: still he did as Jesus bade. And when he had done so, the net was filled with fish, so many that they could not lift it up. Then Peter and the others were frightened, for they knew that this was a miracle, that is, something that can only be done by the power of God. But Jesus said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." And they forsook their boats and followed Jesus, and from that time they never left him. And Jesus went about through all the country, preaching the good news of the kingdom of heaven, and the people brought their sick folk, and the blind and lame and crippled, to him, and he healed them all.





At one time the people who had come to Jesus were so many that he went up on a little hill where he could see them all, and there he taught them. He began this "Sermon on the Mount" with the words which every little child knows, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn,

for they shall be comforted." And then he went on and taught them what he wanted his disciples to be, how they must forgive their enemies, and be kind to every one and willing to do good. He taught them, also, that God, their Father in heaven, took care of them and watched over them, and he taught them the Lord's Prayer, that we all say every day of our lives. The people loved to listen to him, for he was kind and gracious and loving, and he spoke, too, as one who had a right to teach them and to be obeyed.

Not long after this, as Jesus and his disciples were going from one place to another, they came near to the gates of a city called Nain. As they drew near they saw a



procession of people coming out of the gate. It was the funeral of a young man, who was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. The young man's body was lying on an open bier, or litter, for people were not buried in coffins in those days. Beside the bier walked the poor mother, weeping, for the only person she had to love

lay there. Then Jesus drew near to her and said to her gently, "Weep not." She did not know why a stranger should speak to her thus; but the next moment she knew, for Jesus touched the bier and said, "Young man, I say unto thee arise!" And he that was dead sat up and began to speak. Ah! then the mother's tears ceased to flow, and her heart was filled with joy and wonder, for her dear son was alive again.



Now the people crowded around him more than ever, for they were sure that one who could raise the dead must be a person unlike other men. But the scribes and Pharisees were jealous of him, and would not believe that he was the Son of God. And they tried to catch him saying or doing something that he ought not to do or say, but they could not. Jesus only went about doing good and teaching good things, and never doing anything wrong.

One day while he was preaching, his mother and his brothers came and tried to get near him, but they could not get through the crowd. Some one told Jesus that his mother and his brothers wanted to see him. And Jesus, who made everything serve him to teach some

good thing, looked around on the crowd of people and said, "Do you want to know who my mother and brothers are? Every one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." Jesus loved his own mother and brothers very much, but he loves every one of us, who try to please God, as if we were his mother or sister or brother.

Before this Jesus had chosen other men, besides James and John and Andrew and Peter, to be with him as his special friends and disciples and to learn of him. There were twelve of them, and when he called them they left their homes and their work and lived always with Jesus, learning of him and seeing his mighty works. They travelled up and down the land, and Jesus everywhere taught the people and healed them. Many a time he had not where to lay his head, and he was often kept so busy by the people who crowded around him for his help, that he had not even time to pray to God. But at such times he would go away by himself, at night, and spend the whole night somewhere in the woods or on the hills, praying to his Father. And there were some very good women who used to provide things for him at times, and who did all that they could to make him comfortable, for they loved him very much.



Jesus spent much of his time in Capernaum and other cities that were around the Sea of Galilee. It is a beautiful lake among the hills of Galilee, and many of the most beautiful stories that we have of what Christ did and said are what he did and said on the Sea of Galilee. Often when the people crowded around him to hear him, he would get into a boat and put out a little way,

so that he could see them better; and then he would teach them there. One day he did so, and from his place in the boat he told a number of beautiful parables. A parable is a story which is meant to teach some truth or some duty, that is, something that we ought to know or something that we ought to do.

Jesus began by telling a beautiful parable about a sower who went out to sow, and some seed fell by the wayside, where the birds came and ate it, and some fell on stony places, where there was not much earth and it could not grow, and some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked it, and some fell on good ground and bore fruit, thirty and sixty and a hundred times as much as was sowed.

Jesus told many such stories, and afterwards his disciples asked him what they meant, and he told them. The sower sowing the seed was a preacher preaching about God. Some people pay no attention, and the seed does not grow any more than if the birds had eaten it. And some have hard hearts like the stony ground, and some are full of other thoughts that crowd good thoughts out, like thorns, and some receive the word gladly, and it brings forth good fruit in their lives. It is so in the house of God now every Sunday. How many hard, proud, fault-finding hearts are there that get no good! How many thoughts about business or pleasure, like little birds, steal all the good seed! Let us see how much we can carry home and be the better for it. Christ himself is there, speaking to us in his Word, and by his Holy Spirit in our hearts, though we do not see him. If we answer with loving penitence and faith, he will remember it in the judgment-day.





Another parable was about a man who sowed good seed in his field, but in the night while he was asleep his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat. Now tares look like wheat when they are growing, but they are of no use and only keep

the good seed from growing. When the seed began to grow it was seen that there were tares among the wheat, and the man's servants came and asked if they should pull them up. But their master said "No," for they might also pull up the wheat, as both looked so much alike. So he said that both must grow together till the harvest, and then they could be told apart, and the tares could be pulled up and burned, but the wheat would be gathered into the barn.

The parable of the tares meant that we cannot always tell good people from bad in this life, and we ought not to try to judge them: but in the last day God will know, and will punish the wicked and gather the good people into heaven.

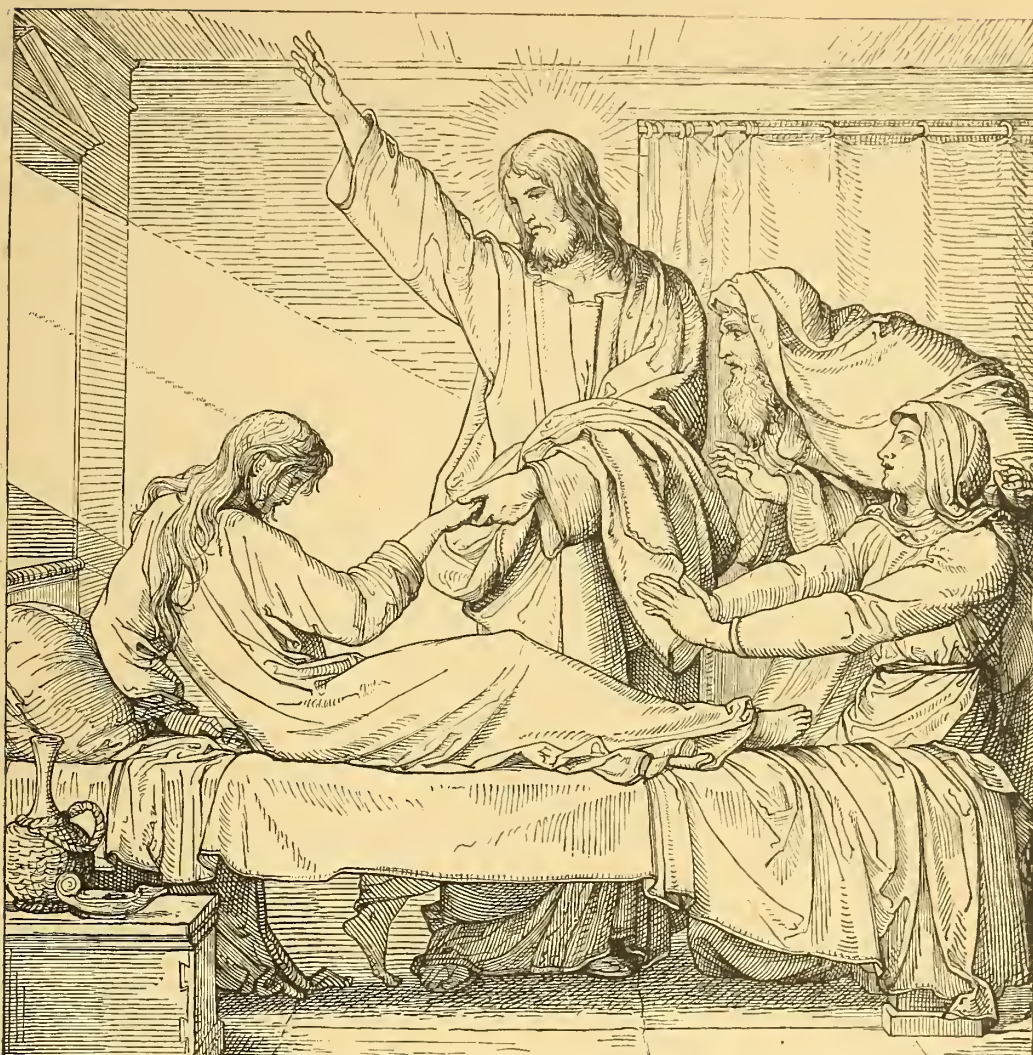
After Jesus had done talking to the people he asked his disciples to row him across the lake, for he had had a very busy day and wanted to go to some quiet place and rest. While they were rowing him he lay down in the stern of a boat with his head



on a leathern cushion, such as rowers used to sit on, and fell fast asleep, for he was very tired. And there came up a terrible storm, such as often comes up on the Lake of Galilee, almost a tornado or cyclone. The disciples were terrified, for the wind blew so hard, and the waves ran so high, that the boat was almost filled with water, and they thought they were going to be swamped. Then they rushed to Jesus and cried, "Master, master, we perish!" Then Jesus awoke, and stood up in the boat, and spoke to the winds and to the waves and said, "Peace, be still!" And the wind died away, and the waves went down, and there was a great calm.



But the disciples were full of awe. They had seen their Master do many mighty works, but never anything like this. And they said to one another, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?"



When Jesus and his disciples came back the next day to Capernaum, where they lived, a certain ruler named Jairus came to meet him, and bowed down before him and begged him to go home with him to heal his little daughter, for she was his only child, and she was dying. Jesus went with him at once, and the disciples followed. When they reached the house Jesus went into the room where the young girl lay. He would let no one go in with him except the father and mother, and Peter, James, and John. And he went up to the bed and took the little girl by the hand, and said, "Damsel, I say unto thee arise!" And the little girl sat up: and he gave her to her mother and told her to give her daughter something to eat, for she was quite well.

Now for a long time John the Baptist had been lying in prison in a strong castle in the region east of Palestine. For Herod the king—the son of the Herod who had killed the babes in Bethlehem—had sent for John to hear him, and John had reproved Herod for his sins; for Herod was a very wicked man, and he had taken his brother's wife, Herodias, away from him and made her his own wife. So Herod shut him in prison, and he would have killed him but he dared not, for the people admired John so much that they would have made trouble.

But when Herod's birthday came he made a feast, and the daughter of Herodias



came and danced before him and pleased him very much, so that he told her with an oath that he would give her anything that she would ask. The girl asked her mother what she should ask for, and Herodias, who was a wicked woman, told her to ask for the head of John the Baptist on a charger, or tray: for she hated John because he had said that she ought not to have left her husband and gone to live with Herod.

When the young girl asked for the head of John the Baptist Herod was sorry; but he had not the courage to say no, because the people who were feasting with him

had heard him make the oath. And so he sent and had John the Baptist's head cut off, and it was brought to the young girl on a tray, as she had asked, and she gave it to her mother. Wicked people often gratify their evil passions in this world, but they only add to their guilt and their suffering in the world to come.

When John's disciples heard of his death they went and buried his body, and then departed and told Jesus the sad news. "Let us go apart into a desert place," he said to his disciples, "and rest a while." But the people would not let him rest. They followed him in great crowds, and so Jesus began again to preach to them and to heal their sick, as he always did.

But when night came he could not bear to send them away without anything to eat, for they had been in that desert place all day, and had far to go to get home. He spoke to his disciples and said, "Give ye them to eat." They answered that they had only five loaves and two fishes, which a little boy had brought them; and as there were about five thousand men there, besides women and children, that little would be of no use. But Jesus told them to make the people sit down in little groups on the green grass: and he took the five loaves and two fishes and blessed them, and



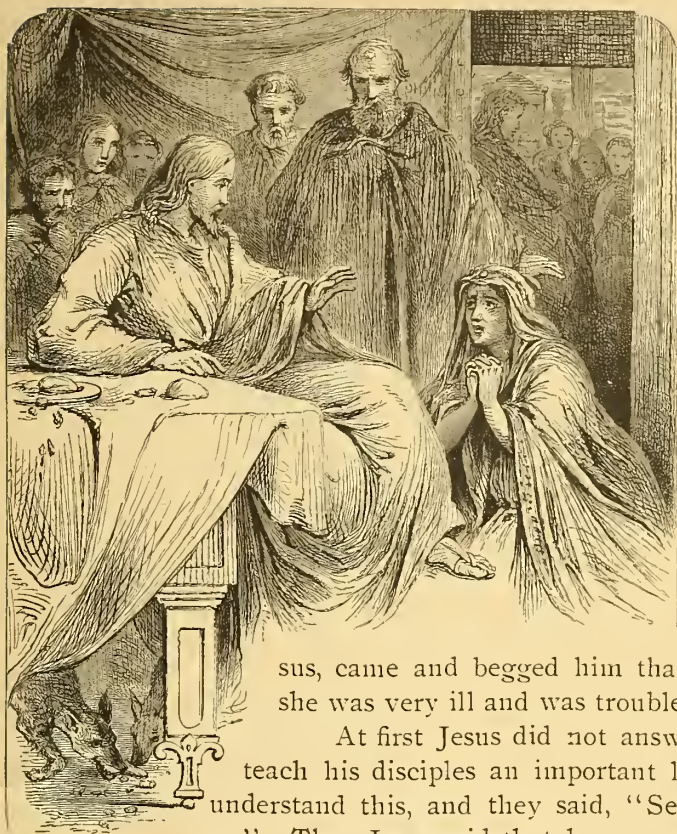
broke them in pieces and gave the pieces to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people, and there was enough for all. And when the people had eaten they gathered up the pieces that were left, and they filled twelve baskets.

Then Jesus sent all the people away, and told his disciples to get into their boat and go across the lake to their homes, but he himself went up into the mountain



to pray. But the waves were high and the wind was contrary, and in the dark the disciples saw Jesus coming towards them walking on the water; and Peter said, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water," and Jesus said, "Come."

So Peter got out of the boat to walk to Jesus on the water: but suddenly his



sus, came and begged him that he would heal her daughter, for she was very ill and was troubled by evil spirits.

At first Jesus did not answer the woman, for he wanted to teach his disciples an important lesson. But the disciples did not understand this, and they said, "Send her away, for she crieth after us." Then Jesus said that he was sent first to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and he went into the house and sat down. But she followed, and fell on her knees and said, "Lord, help me!" And Jesus answered that it was not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. But though it must have been hard for her to hear herself thus compared to a dog, her love for her daughter, and her faith that Jesus could heal her, made her very patient, and she said, "Yea, Lord, yet the dogs under the tables eat of the children's crumbs." It was a wise and beautiful answer; and now Jesus had shown both her and the disciples what he wished to teach them, and he said, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." And when she reached home her daughter was well. This was the first lesson we know of that Jesus gave to the disciples that others besides the Jews had any part in the salvation which he came to bring. They were slow to learn that God had granted even unto the Gentiles repentance and salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.



courage failed and he lost faith in Jesus' word, and at once he began to sink. Then he cried, "Lord, save me!" And Jesus stretched out his hand and caught him, and said, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" And Jesus led him back to the boat, and all the disciples came and worshipped Jesus and said, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

Then Jesus went away with his disciples towards Phœnicia, the country of Hiram, king of Tyre, the friend of David and Solomon. And a woman of that country, who had been a heathen, but had heard of Je-

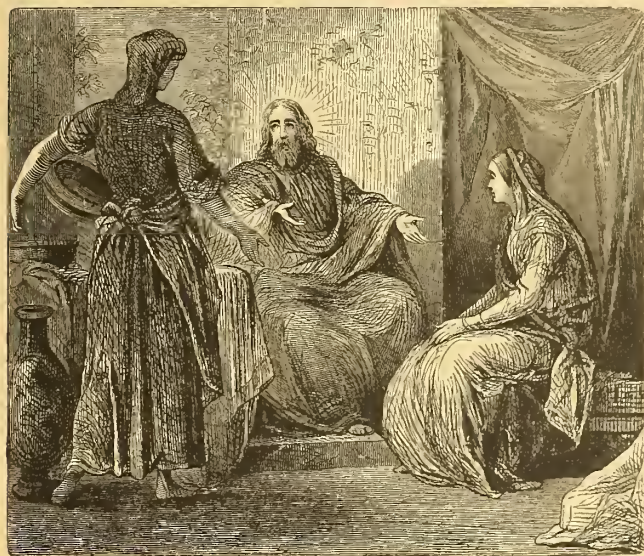


Not long after a man brought his son, who was dreadfully tormented by evil spirits, and he wanted him to be healed. The boy was always falling, he said, sometimes into the fire and sometimes into the water, and no one could cure him. And he added, "But if thou canst do anything, have pity on us and help us."

Then Jesus said, "All things are possible to him that believeth." And the man cried out with tears, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief!" And Jesus spoke to the evil spirits that were in the child, and they left him and the boy was made well.

After these things Jesus and his disciples went up to Jerusalem to a feast. Not far from Jerusalem is a village called Bethany, and in that village lived a brother and two sisters. Their names were Lazarus and Martha and Mary. They invited Jesus to their house to stay while he was attending the feast, for Bethany is less than two miles from Jerusalem. Jesus did so, and he loved them all very dearly.

Martha was anxious to have everything very nice while Jesus was there, for she wanted to do him honor: but Mary wanted most of all to hear him talk, and she sat at his feet and listened to his words. Jesus told Martha that she was a faithful worker, but that the most needful thing was to know the will of God; and Mary had chosen that good part, which would not be taken away from her.



One day a Rabbi asked Jesus whom he ought to treat as neighbors, and Jesus told this story. A man who was travelling was attacked by robbers, who took all he had and left him half dead. Before long a priest went by, and afterward a Levite, but they did nothing to help him. Then a despised Samaritan came, and when he saw the wounded man he bound



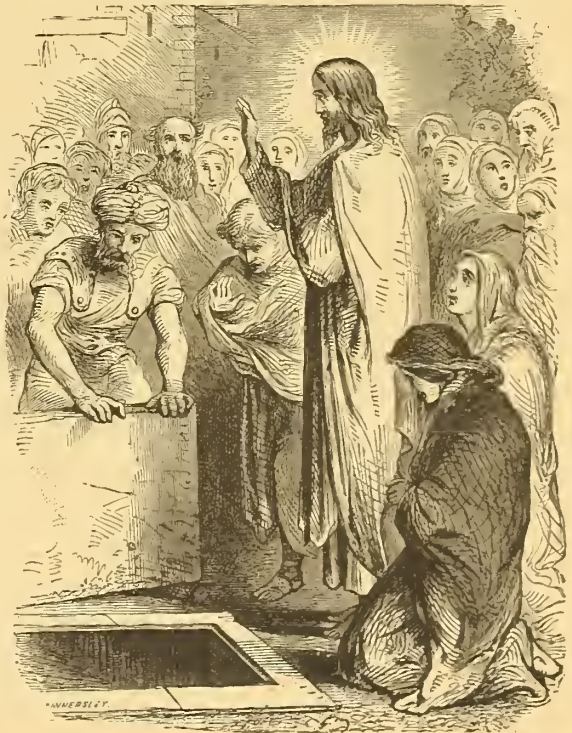
up his wounds and set him on his own beast and took him to the khan, where travellers stop at night, and paid the khan-keeper to take care of him till he was well. Was not the Samaritan more of a neighbor to the poor man than the priest or the Levite? So our neighbor is any one who needs our help.



But the more Jesus taught the people and did them good, the more the rulers, the scribes and Pharisees and priests, hated him and tried to kill him. It was not time yet for Jesus to die: his work was not yet done: so he went away beyond Jordan into a quiet place, and there went on teaching his disciples. But while he was gone Lazarus fell ill. Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus, "Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick," but before Jesus reached Bethany Lazarus was dead and buried. When Jesus drew near to Bethany he sent for Martha to come and meet him,

and Martha fell down before him and said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died." Jesus told her that her brother should rise again, but she thought he meant that Lazarus should rise at the last day. She could not believe that Jesus could raise him then, for he had been dead four days.

When Jesus went to the grave and saw Mary and Martha weeping, he wept too, for he was very tender-hearted for those in sorrow. But then he told the people to roll away the stone from the grave, and he called, "Lazarus, come forth!" And Lazarus came forth out of the grave, for his spirit had come back to his body when Jesus called him. The scribes and Pharisees were all the more anxious to kill Jesus after he raised Lazarus from the dead, but the poor people, and those who had been very wicked but wanted to be good, flocked around him all the more. And to them he told the story of the prodigal son, who had left his father's house and gone into a far country and spent all his





money in sin and folly. Finally he became so poor that all he could get to do was to feed swine, and even then he could not get enough to eat. Then he resolved to go back to his father, and tell him that he had sinned, and ask leave to be his servant. But while he was yet a long way from his home his father saw him coming back, and rushed to meet him and kissed him, and called to the servants to bring out the best robe for him, and shoes and ornaments, and to kill the fatted calf and have a great feast, for he said, "This my son was dead and is alive again." And so, Jesus said, there is joy in heaven when a sinner is sorry for his sin and returns to serve his Heavenly Father.



Another parable was about a poor man named Lazarus. He lay at the gate of a rich man, and was thankful even for the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. But after a time the beggar died and the angels carried him to heaven. The rich



man died too, and went to the place of torment. By this parable Jesus taught that it was not riches nor learning nor anything outside of a man that makes him accepted of God; for God looks on the heart and sees who it is that really tries to please him.

Another parable Jesus spoke to those who thought themselves righteous. Two men went into the temple to pray: one was a Pharisee and the other a publican. The



Pharisee thanked God that he was not so bad as other men were, and repeated over all his good deeds. But the publican would not so much as lift up his eyes, but beat his breast with his hands, saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" And God heard and answered the prayer of the publican, but he was not pleased with the Pharisee's prayer.

One day a good many mothers brought their little children to Jesus, asking him to bless them. The disciples wanted to send them away, but Jesus said, "Let the little children come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." And he took them in his arms and laid his hands on them and blessed them.



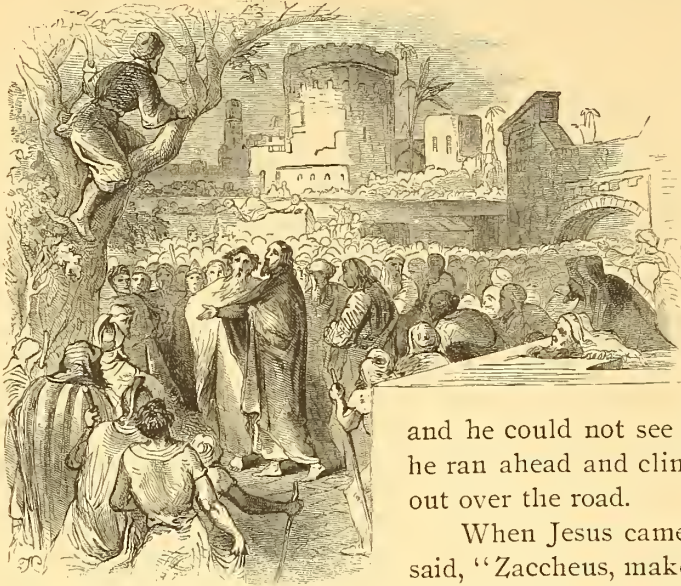
At another time Jesus told a parable expressly for the benefit of his disciples. It was about a rich man who had a large vineyard, and who went out early in the morning to find people to work in the vineyard. And when he found some he agreed

to give them each a penny a day, which was good wages for that country at that time. And at nine o'clock he went out again and hired more men, saying that he would pay them what was right; and so he did again at noon and at three in the afternoon. And at five o'clock he went out and found some men whom no one had hired all day long, and he told them to go and work for him and he would give them what was right. When six o'clock came he called those whom he had hired last and gave them each a penny, and the others all supposed that they were going to have more; but each one got only his penny. Then they complained to the lord of the vineyard, because they, who had worked a whole day, had received no more than those who had worked only one hour. But the lord reminded them that they had received all that they had earned, and told them that he had a right to be generous to the others if he wished. By this parable our Lord taught the free grace of God in saving those who have not earned a right to salvation by any good deeds of theirs.



When the time of the Feast of the Passover was at hand, Jesus and his disciples went back to Jerusalem, for Jesus said he must by all means keep that feast there. On their way they passed through Jericho, and as they drew near to the city gate there was a blind beggar, named Bartimeus, who, when he heard that Jesus was passing by, cried with a loud voice, "Thou son of David, have mercy on me!" The people who were around bade him be quiet, but he cried so much the more, "Have mercy on me!" Then Jesus stood still and told them to bring the man to him. And when they had brought him Jesus asked him what he wanted. He answered, "Lord,

that I might receive my sight!" And Jesus said, "Receive thy sight; thy faith hath saved thee!" And at once he received his sight and followed Jesus.



Then Jesus went through the gate of Jericho into the city. There was a great crowd of people around him: many of them, like him, were going to Jerusalem to the feast, and many more had flocked around him as soon as they heard of the blind man's wonderful cure. Now there was one man named Zaccheus who wanted very much to see Jesus, but he could not, for he was a little man,

and he could not see over the heads of the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a tree that branched out over the road.

When Jesus came under the tree he looked up and said, "Zaccheus, make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide in thy house." How joyfully the little

man climbed down the tree! How happy he was to lead his honored guest to his house!

Now Zaccheus was a publican, or tax-gatherer. He was, in fact, the chief of the publicans, and very rich: but he was hated and despised by everybody, as all publicans were. This was partly because publicans almost always cheated the people about their taxes, and partly because the taxes were for the Roman emperor, whom the Jews served because they must, not because they wanted to, and they hated everything that reminded them of his dominion over them; and now some of the people who stood close by and heard what Jesus said about going to Zaccheus' house, murmured and said that he was going to be the guest of a man that was a sinner. But Zaccheus wanted to be an honest man, in spite of all his temptations, and when Jesus spoke kindly to him, and told him that salvation had come to his house, he was most happy. How much he loved Jesus for being so gracious to him! He told the Lord that from that time he would give half his goods to the poor, and if he found that he had by mistake wronged any man in collecting the taxes, he would give him back four times as much. This was a brave thing for the little man to say before all the people gathered around, but no doubt the kindly, earnest look in Jesus' face gave him courage. And Jesus said again, as he had before, that he had come to the earth to save those who had sinned and to help those who were tempted.

But it was soon time to go on to Jerusalem, for Jesus had a work to do there. And when he was come near to Jerusalem, and had reached the turn of the road, going over the Mount of Olives, where the Holy City first comes into view, he wept over it.

For our Lord loved his country, and that city which had once been "the joy of the whole earth," and he loved the Jews, though so many of them hated him and were trying, as he knew, to kill him. And so, thinking of all the dreadful woes that were to come upon Jerusalem as a punishment for rejecting him, he wept, and said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" For so our Lord longs to save every one, even those who will not come unto him and have life. Alas! they know not what they do.



When Jesus and his disciples were near Jerusalem, at a little village called Bethphage, Jesus sent two of his disciples into the village, telling them that they would find an ass standing tied, at a place where two roads met, and her colt standing by her. Jesus bade the disciples untie the ass and bring it and the colt to him; and if the owner made any objection, to say, "The Lord hath need of them." For Jesus knew that the owner of the ass and the colt was one of those who believed on him and would be glad to serve him.

Now all the multitude who had been with Jesus on his journey towards Jerusalem, who had heard the gracious words which he had spoken, and had seen his wonderful miracle of healing the blind man, were full of the thought that he must be the Messiah, or Anointed one, for whom the nation had so long been hoping. When therefore the



disciples brought the ass, and taking off their long outer garments laid them over the back of the colt and set Jesus thereon, the whole multitude broke forth into shouts of praise, saying, "Hosanna! blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" And they stripped off their outer robes and threw them down for the colt to walk upon, and broke off the long leaves of the palm trees and strewed them in the way.

Thus, shouting and rejoicing, they came to Jerusalem, Jesus riding in their midst. And the very children crowded around Jesus, waving palms and shouting "Hosanna!" thus fulfilling a passage in the Psalms, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise."



Then Jesus went into the temple, and he found there many men who had animals or doves to sell for sacrifice, and money-changers, who changed the money of those who came to the feast from other countries. Thus that sacred and beautiful house of God had been turned into a house of merchandise. Then Jesus drove them out, and such was the majesty and dignity of his look that they could not but obey him and hasten away.

The rulers hated him for his goodness, and they tried to find an excuse for arresting him. So they asked him if it was right to pay tribute to Cæsar, the emperor, when



God was their King, thinking thus to get him into trouble. But Jesus asked them to tell him whose was that head with which the coin paid in tribute was stamped. When they answered, "Cæsar's," he bade them "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's."



One day as he was teaching in the temple, and the rich men were bringing their gifts to the treasury, a poor widow came and threw in two lepta, coins worth about one-twelfth of a cent. And Jesus said that she had given more than all the rich men, for she had given all that she had. For the love and self-denial of that poor widow were worth more to God than all the proud gifts of the rich.

It was only six days before the Passover that Jesus had come to Jerusalem, and every evening during that week, after passing the day in the temple teaching the people, he went out to Bethany and spent the night with his dear friends, Martha and Mary and Lazarus. On one of these evenings they made a feast for him, for they loved to do him honor. Then, while they were all at table, Jesus and his friends reclining upon couches, as was the custom of that



time, and Martha waiting upon them, like the good housekeeper that she was, Mary came softly behind Jesus, bringing a beautiful alabaster vase of very costly oil of spikenard, such as only rich people used, and poured the fragrant oil over the head and over the feet of Jesus, wiping his feet with her long, soft hair. The whole house was filled with the sweet odor, which testified of Mary's deep love for her Lord. But Judas, one of the disciples, murmured, saying that the ointment might have been sold for a great deal of money and given to the poor. Yet Judas did not love the poor so much as his words seemed to show: but it was his duty to take care of the purse in which Jesus and his disciples kept all their money in common, and though he was one of the disciples of Jesus, he had an inordinate love of money, and was even willing to do wrong for the sake of it.

When Jesus heard what Judas said, he answered that Mary had done a good thing in thus showing her deep love, and he added that wherever the gospel should be preached in all the world, it would be told how Mary had anointed her Saviour's feet with costly ointment.

But Judas grew more covetous every day, and as he knew that the chief priests and rulers were trying to arrest Jesus, he went to them and bargained to betray Jesus into their power if they would pay him thirty pieces of silver. Perhaps Judas did not realize how awful a crime he was committing. He had seen Jesus do so many miracles that he probably thought He would save himself, and that no harm would come of it, and that he himself would be the gainer by thirty pieces of silver. But his sin was none the less dreadful because he was so blinded by love of money as not to realize what he was doing.

At last the night came on which Jesus was to be betrayed to death. It was the night of the Passover, and he would keep that last sacred feast with his disciples. So he sent two of them to Jerusalem to make ready the Passover, and when evening came he and all the twelve gathered together in an upper chamber for the feast. But first, that he might teach them in this last solemn hour that lesson so hard to learn,



that only he who serves mankind is worthy of honor, he laid aside his upper garment, and fastened a towel around his waist, and pouring water into a basin he began to wash his disciples' feet. Simon Peter was shocked at the thought of his doing such a thing, but Jesus told him, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." And when he had finished and had sat down again among them, he explained to them that if he, their Lord and Master, was willing to wash their feet, they ought to be willing to do anything for one another; and he taught them that the greatest man is he who does most for others.

Then they gathered around the table, Jesus in the midst of his friends. But he knew that one among them was not his friend, and his heart grew very heavy, and at last he said, "One of you will betray me." The eleven heard him with horror and grief, and each exclaimed, "Lord, is it I?" and even Judas

said, "Lord, is it I?" Now John, the disciple whom Jesus loved best, was next to Jesus at the table, and Peter whispered to John to ask Jesus who it was; Jesus answered



that it was the one to whom he would give a sop, or a piece of bread dipped in the sauce of bitter herbs which was eaten with the Passover. Presently he gave a sop to Judas, and said to him, "What thou doest do quickly." When Judas heard this he got up and went out, but the disciples did not know what he had gone for.

When Judas was gone Jesus took bread and broke it and handed it to them all, telling them that it was a sign of his body, which was to be broken for them. And afterward he took the cup and passed it around, telling them that the wine was a token of his blood, which would be shed for them. And he bade them do this often in memory of him. All Christians, from that time to this, have eaten the bread and drunk the wine in memory of Christ. We call it the Lord's Supper, or the Communion, because in partaking of it we commune or have fellowship with Jesus.

After the communion Jesus talked long with his disciples, comforting them and teaching them most tenderly, promising to send the Holy Spirit to give them power to do wonderful works in his name. Then he prayed with them, and they sang together the Psalms which were always sung at the Passover feast—the one hundred and thirteenth to the one hundred and eighteenth. It was now late in the evening, and the full moon was shining brightly over the city, with its crowds of people all making merry after the feast.

Jesus led his disciples forth to a garden outside of the city, called Gethsemane, where he often went to pray: for the time of his trial was drawing near, and he felt the need of being alone with his Father.

When they reached the garden Jesus left all his disciples behind, except Peter and James and John; and when they had gone on, under the shadow of the olive-trees, he asked these dear friends to watch while he prayed. And going farther he fell upon his knees and prayed, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt." Three times he repeated this prayer.



All the agony of the hours that were to come, the betrayal, the trial, the mockings and scourgings, the crucifixion, the burden of a whole world's sin, swept over his soul; but though the anguish of that hour pressed from him a sweat of blood, he so loved the world that he did not draw back.

When Jesus came back to his disciples he found them sleeping, and he said gently,



“What, could ye not watch with me one hour?” While he was speaking a crowd of people and soldiers entered the garden with lanterns and torches, and Judas at their head. He had told the soldiers that they would know which one to arrest by his kissing him: and now he came up to Jesus saying, “Master, master!” and kissed him. Jesus answered, “Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?” And



then he gave himself up to the soldiers, only insisting that his friends should be allowed to go away free.

Then the soldiers led Jesus away to the high-priest's house, and to the rulers who were waiting there; and after going through a mock trial they gave him up to the temple servants, who mocked him and smote him on the face and treated him most shamefully. And as soon as it was day the chief priests and rulers led him before Pilate, the Roman governor, followed by crowds of people, crying, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate did not want to condemn Jesus to death, but he was afraid of the people, and it was not long before he did as they asked. When Jesus had been condemned he was given up to the Roman soldiers for the cruel torture of scourging, the soldiers first binding his hands, while all the people thronged around him, shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" And yet it was only six days since the streets of Jerusalem had rung with cries of "Hosanna!"

Through all this dreadful night and morning Jesus had been calm, never mur-



muring, and only speaking once or twice in words of solemn dignity. What he was suffering we can never realize: but he bore it all for love of a guilty world.

When he had been scourged the soldiers put a crown of thorns upon his head, and a reed in his hand for a sceptre, and they knelt before him, in hideous sport, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" Then they led him away to be crucified.



It was the middle of a bright spring day when Jesus was nailed to the cross, but a dreadful darkness came over all the earth, like that of the blackest night. Then Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" And after

three hours of suffering he uttered a great cry, and saying, "It is finished!" he gave up his spirit.

Yes, it was finished, the work which, ever since that day of sin in Eden, thousands of years before, the Son of God had taken upon himself—of saving sinful men. There was no need any longer of sacrifice for sin, for Christ, the Lamb of God, had died for the sins of the world.

When night came and the beautiful Passover moon was shining on the earth, some friends of Jesus went to Pilate and begged that they might have his body for burial. One of them was Nicodemus, the ruler who had come to Jesus on another night like



this, three years before, to learn of him; and one was Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, who had a new tomb in a garden near Calvary in which he wanted to lay the body of Jesus. And waiting for Pilate's answer were the sad-hearted women who had loved Jesus so dearly, serving him in his life and following him to the cross. Pilate wondered if Jesus was dead so soon, for people often lived for days upon the cross, but he found that Jesus was really dead, and a soldier thrust a spear into his side.

Then Pilate gave them leave to bury Jesus; and they went together to the cross

and took down that sacred body, and anointing it with sweet spices and wrapping it in white linen, they carried it to the tomb, and laying it gently in its place, they rolled a great stone before the entrance of the tomb.

It was now Friday night, the night before the Jewish Sabbath, which is Saturday, and all these friends of Jesus went to their homes to rest over the Sabbath day, according to God's command. But the enemies of our Lord remembered that he had more than once said that when he was put to death he would rise again in three days, and so they went to Pilate and asked that a guard might be set to watch the grave, and that the stone might be sealed, lest the disciples should come and steal the body and pretend that their master was risen from the dead. Pilate told them that they had their temple guard, and that they might make the tomb as secure as they could: and so they sealed the stone and set their soldiers to watch.



All through the Sabbath day and night they watched; but in the early morning of the first day of the week, while yet the dawn was gray around them, a sudden light, far brighter than that of day, shone upon the terrified soldiers. The earth shook, the seal upon the great stone was broken, and the stone rolled away from before the tomb; and while the soldiers, stunned and terrified, lay along the ground like dead men, the Lord Jesus came forth from the tomb.

As soon as they had recovered from their shock the soldiers fled away into the city, and shortly after a band of women drew near. It was the faithful Mary Magdalene, and another Mary, and Susanna the wife of Herod's steward. They had spent the night, after the Sabbath was over, in preparing costly ointment for the body of their dear Lord, and now, as they came along together in the growing morning

light, they said to one another, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" But when they reached the tomb the stone was rolled away. When Mary Magdalene saw this she thought some one had stolen her Lord's body, and she ran back to the city to tell Peter and John. The other women went sadly up to the tomb and peeped in, and there they saw a shining angel, sitting in the place where the Lord had been laid. The next moment another angel appeared and said to them, "Fear not!" and bade them remember that Jesus had told them that he would arise from the dead.

When Mary Magdalene came, breathless, to Peter and John with word that the

Lord's body had been stolen away, they ran at once to the tomb. But though they found it empty, they saw no sign that the body of Jesus had been stolen, for the linen clothes in which he had been wrapped were carefully folded and lying in the tomb. But they did not see the angels, and wondering and troubled, they went back to tell the other disciples.

Mary Magdalene had followed them back to the garden, and when they went away she stood at the door of the tomb weeping. But looking in she saw two angels, in bright robes, sitting, the one at the head and the other at the foot, where the Lord had lain.

"Woman," said one of the angels to her, "why weepest thou?" And Mary answered, with a broken heart, "Because they have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid him."

When she had said this she turned and saw a man standing near her. He too

asked her why she wept, and she, supposing him to be the gardener, said, "Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away."

The stranger said to her, "Mary!" Ah! now she knew that voice, and falling at his feet she cried, "Rabboni! My Master!"

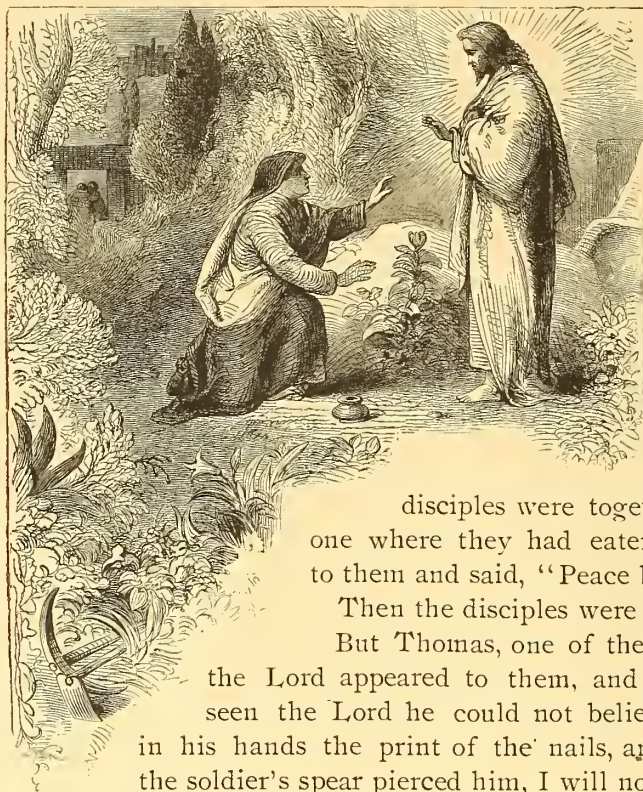
Then Jesus told her to go and tell his disciples that he was risen from the dead, and that he would go to Galilee, and would there see those who truly believed on him.

But that very night, when the disciples were together in an upper room, perhaps that one where they had eaten the Passover together, Jesus came to them and said, "Peace be to you!" and talked to them.

Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

But Thomas, one of the disciples, was not with them when the Lord appeared to them, and when they told him that they had seen the Lord he could not believe it. And he said, "Except I see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side where the soldier's spear pierced him, I will not believe."

The next Sunday, when they were all together again, and Thomas with them, Jesus came to them again and said, "Peace be unto you!" And then he said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing." And Thomas, falling down before him, exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" Happy are we, as Christ himself has said, if we in our hearts can do the same.





Then Jesus said, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed."

For forty days Jesus remained on earth, seeing his disciples often, teaching them much that he wanted them to know, and encouraging and comforting them. At one time as many as five hundred saw him at once.



At last he led his disciples out to the top of the Mount of Olives. There he gave them his last command, bidding them go into all the world and preach the gospel to every one; and then he blessed them, and while he was blessing them he arose slowly into the air, and a cloud received him out of their sight.



THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

AFTER Jesus ascended into heaven the disciples stayed in Jerusalem, and in a few days the Holy Spirit came down into their hearts as Jesus had promised. Now they were no longer afraid of the priests and rulers, and they preached Jesus boldly. One morning, as Peter and John went up to the temple, they saw a poor lame man, who

had never walked in his life, sitting at the gate of the temple called the Beautiful Gate, and begging. The man begged of Peter and John; and Peter said to him, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and at once the man became strong, and he leaped up and went into the temple, leaping and praising God.

Peter and John had leave to call upon God to do this miracle, because Jesus had sent his Holy Spirit upon them as he had promised. And from this time a great many people began to believe in Jesus: in a few weeks' time there were more than three thousand who believed.

And as a great many of them were very poor, others who had lands or houses sold them and brought the money to the apostles to be shared among those who had need.

There was a man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, who joined Christ's disciples, but their hearts were still covetous. They also sold some land, but they agreed to keep a part of the money for themselves. Ananias brought the money to the apostles; but Peter knew that he was trying to get credit which he did not deserve, and he said, "Ananias, why do you try to lie to the Holy Ghost by keeping back a part of the price of the land? You have lied about it, not to man, but to God." And when Ananias heard this, conscience-struck and appalled, he fell down dead!



A few moments afterwards Sapphira came in, and Peter asked her if that money was the price of the land, and she said that it was. Then Peter asked her how it was that she and her husband had agreed together to try to deceive God; and Sapphira fell down dead, as her husband had done. This made the new believers understand that to believe on Christ means also to strive to be holy like him.

Before long the apostles chose seven good men, whom they called deacons, to help them in taking care of the poor. One of these men was named Stephen, and he did such wonderful works that the

scribes and Pharisees seized him and dragged him before the council, as they had done with Jesus before. Stephen was not afraid of the council, and he boldly preached Jesus to them.

His preaching cut them to the heart, and they rushed upon him and dragged him



out of the city and stoned him with stones until he died. But with his last breath he prayed for them, saying, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." And when he had said this he died, as peacefully as if he was falling asleep, amid the stones that were raining upon him.

There was a young man named Saul who belonged to the council. He was a devout man and full of zeal for the law, but he hated the disciples of Jesus, because he could not believe that Jesus was the Messiah. He went with those who stoned Stephen, and the sight of his holy and

beautiful death only made him more bitter against the people of Christ. He began to persecute them so that many of them fled from Jerusalem to escape danger. But wherever they went they preached the gospel, so that the more they were persecuted the more the word of God was spread abroad.

One of the seven deacons was named Philip, and as he was going from Jerusalem to Gaza he met a chariot in which was a great man of a neighboring country. He was reading the Hebrew Bible, at a place where it prophesied about the Messiah. Philip went up to the chariot and asked him if he understood what he was reading, and he answered that he needed some one to explain it to him, and begged Philip to come up into the chariot and explain it. Then Philip went up into the chariot and preached Jesus to him, and the great man believed and was baptized, and went on his way rejoicing.

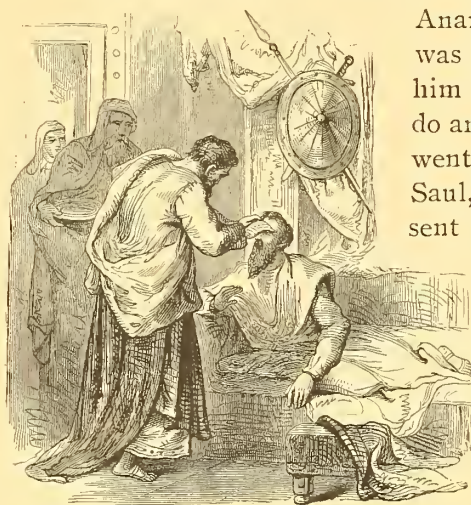


The country from which this great man had come was in Africa, south of Egypt. He was an officer of Queen Candace, of that country, and had charge of her great treasures. As he had been up at Jerusalem on purpose to worship, and was reading the Hebrew Bible, it seemed that he was a Jew. Many of his countrymen lived in that region, and after his return many embraced Christianity, and the Bible was afterwards translated into the language of the country.

After Philip had come up from the water, after baptizing the officer, the Spirit of God caught him away out of sight, and he was next found preaching the gospel in Azotus.

Now Saul was persecuting the believers with all his might, and every day growing more furious against them. At last he went to the high-priest and asked to be sent to Damascus, to search for any disciples of Jesus who might be living there, and bring them bound to Jerusalem. But as he drew near to Damascus suddenly a great light shone around about him, and Saul fell from his horse to the earth, for he heard a voice calling to him and saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Saul was terrified, but he answered, "Who art thou, Lord?" And the Lord answered, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." Then Saul asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And Jesus told him to arise and go into the city, and it would be told him what he should do.

Then Saul arose from the earth; but he had been blinded by the great light and could not see, and his companions had to lead him. For three days he remained in darkness, too much distressed by the thought of how he had sinued against Jesus Christ to be able to eat or drink.



After three days the Lord bade a good man named Ananias go to Saul. At first Ananias was afraid to go, for he had heard that Saul was persecuting the people of Christ; but the Lord told him that Saul was a chosen servant of His, who would do and suffer great things for His sake. Then Ananias went and put his hands on Saul and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord who appeared to thee in the way has sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And then Saul's sight returned to him, and he was baptized, and the disciples gave him some food.

He began at once to preach Jesus in the synagogues of the Jews, and many people believed when they heard Saul preach. For this reason the Jews resolved to kill him, and they watched the city gates day and night for a good



opportunity to kill him. Then the disciples took Saul by night and let him down over the wall in a basket, and Saul went away alone to a desert place in Arabia, and there he stayed three years, thinking about God and praying to him and studying what the Bible had prophesied about the Messiah. At the end of three years he went to



Jerusalem to see the apostles, and then he went quietly to his own home at Tarsus, in Asia Minor, to wait until God should give him work to do.

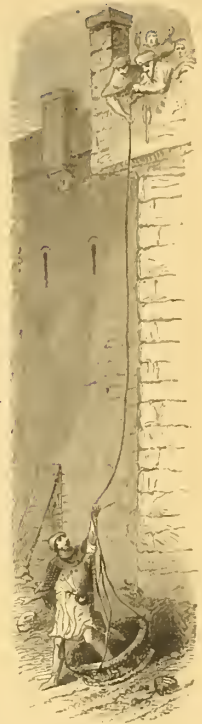
Saul had been very strictly brought up, for his father was a Pharisee, and very particular that his son should be thoroughly taught in the law. When he was about thirteen he had been sent to Jerusalem for further education, and there he had been taught by a Rabbi, or doctor of the law, named Gamaliel,

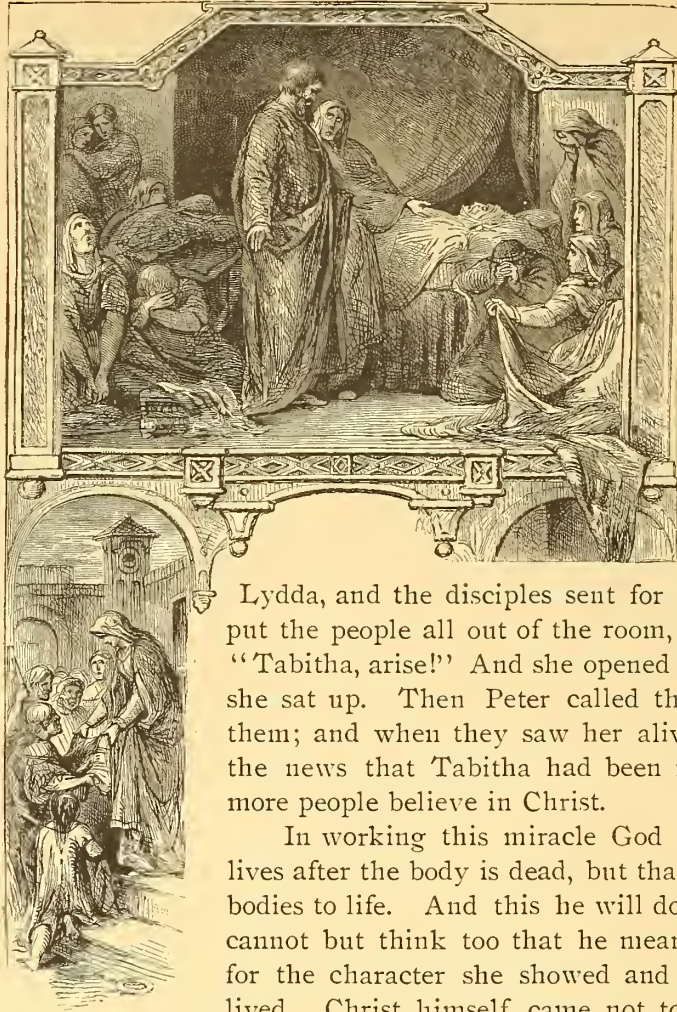
one of the wisest and most famous of the Jewish teachers. At Gamaliel's feet the young Saul had sat, after the custom of those times, while the great Rabbi explained the law to him and to his fellow-pupils; and he became zealous for the law of God. But he had never believed that Jesus was the Son of God and the Messiah for whom he was daily praying, until the Holy Spirit came to him in such awful power on the road to Damascus. From that hour his whole life was changed, his heart and soul were devoted to Christ, and he served him as no man has ever served him since.



The instruction he received from Gamaliel was a great help to him when he became a gospel minister. He was perfectly familiar with Old Testament history and the writings of the prophets; and he knew all about the rites and sacrifices of the Law, and could see how wonderfully they were fulfilled in the blessed "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." He knew, too, all about the customs and opinions and prejudices of his countrymen, and how to reason with them out of their own Scriptures.

While Saul was living alone in Arabia the apostles were going about among the scattered believers, comforting them and teaching them more about Christ.





Now there was in Joppa, that city on the seacoast from which Jonah had long ago tried to flee from the presence of God, a disciple of Jesus named Tabitha, or Dorcas. She was full of good works, and was always making things for the poor or doing them good in some way. But Tabitha fell ill and died, and was laid in an upper chamber, and the poor people came flocking to her house to weep for her and to tell how good she was and to show the clothes that she had made for them. Now Peter was not far off, at

Lydda, and the disciples sent for him. Then he came, and having put the people all out of the room, he prayed beside her bed and said, "Tabitha, arise!" And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. Then Peter called the people and showed Tabitha to them; and when they saw her alive again they were very glad, and the news that Tabitha had been raised from the dead made many more people believe in Christ.

In working this miracle God not only showed us that the soul lives after the body is dead, but that He has the power to restore dead bodies to life. And this he will do for all men at the last day. We cannot but think too that he meant to put special honor on Dorcas for the character she showed and the unselfish and useful life she lived. Christ himself came not to be ministered unto, but to min-

ister, and to give even his life for us: and his people ought to be like him. If they live only to be waited upon and enjoy themselves, they are not like him, and he will say to them in the judgment day, "I never knew you." So he himself has warned us. But very dear to him are the men and women—yes, and the boys and girls—who, out of love to him, are always trying to do all they can to make others happier and better. It is probable that Dorcas began early to form the habit of good-doing. If she had grown up a self-indulgent woman, taking her ease, she would never have won the grateful love of so many people whom she could make happy; she never would have been restored to life and honored by all the millions who read about her in the Bible. Who would not follow her example, and hear Christ say in the last day, "Inasmuch as ye have done this unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me"!



Now while Peter was in Joppa he one day went up to the flat roof of a house to pray, and while he was there he had a vision which taught him something that none of the apostles had ever understood up to this time.

The Jews despised all the rest of the world, because they themselves were God's chosen people. Peter's vision showed him that God did not call any man "common" or "unclean," as the Jews used in scorn to call the Gentiles; and as soon as he awoke he found out why the vision had been sent to him just then. He found that there were three men asking for him

at the gate, sent by a Roman soldier named Cornelius, who lived in a city called Cesarea. Though Cornelius was a Gentile, he was a good man, and prayed often to God; so God told him to send for Peter, who would tell him what to do. Peter went and preached Jesus to Cornelius and his household, and they believed and were baptized.

Now there were a great many disciples of Christ in a city called Antioch, enough to make a flourishing church, and it was there that the disciples were first called Christians. One of the preachers in Antioch was named Barnabas, a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit, and he went to Tarsus and brought Saul to Antioch, and he stayed

there a year. Then the Holy Spirit bade the Antioch church send Barnabas and Saul forth to go and preach in other places, where the word of God had not yet come; and they sailed to the island of Cyprus, and preached the gospel there before the deputy, or governor of the island. But there was a false prophet there named Elymas who tried to hinder them, and Saul reproved him and told him that he should be blind for a time, because he tried

to hinder the preaching of the gospel. And at once he became blind and had to grope his way about; and when the deputy and the people saw this they believed.





From this time Saul was no longer called Saul, but Paul, which is the Latin form of the same name. After this Barnabas and Paul crossed over to Asia Minor and went to another Antioch, in Pisidia, and preached. But the Jews persuaded the authorities to send them away. Then they went to Lystra, and there they healed a lame man who had never walked. When the people saw this they thought that their gods had come down to earth in the likeness of men, and they called the priest of Jupiter, one of their gods, intending to offer sacrifice to them. But the apostles forbade them, saying they were only men. Many of the people of Lystra soon began to believe in



Jesus: but the Jews came from Antioch and stirred them up into a great state of excitement, so that they seized Paul and stoned him and dragged his unconscious body outside the city wall and flung it there, thinking him dead. The people who had learned to believe in Christ followed, sorrowing; but while they were mourning

over Paul he revived and rose up and went back with them into the city. But it was not wise for him and Barnabas to remain longer in Lystra, and so the next day they bade the new converts farewell and went away, going back through all the cities where they had taught, founding churches among the new converts, before going back to Antioch in Syria.

Some years after, Paul took a disciple named Silas and went to visit these churches. Now in Lystra there was a youth named Timothy, whose mother Lois was a



Jewess. Lois had taught Timothy from his earliest childhood to understand the Bible. She had been among the Christian converts when Paul and Barnabas made their first

visit to Lystra. Now, after seven years, they found the child Timothy grown to be a young man and an earnest Christian, and he joined Paul and Silas in their journey. Paul grew to love him as if he were his own son, and they worked happily together.



After Paul and Silas had visited Lystra they went over to Macedonia in Europe, and came to Philippi, where they stayed for some time. On Sundays they went to the Jewish place of prayer, and there they preached.

There was among them a certain woman named Lydia. She was not a Jewess, but she believed in the God of the Jews, and now the Lord opened her heart to believe in Christ. After she was baptized she begged Paul and Silas to make her house their home as long as they stayed in Philippi.

Many people in Philippi believed in witchcraft and fortune-telling, and there was a

young slave-girl who seemed to have a particular gift at fortune-telling. When she heard Paul and Silas preach she followed them through the streets, crying, "These men are the servants of the most high God."

When Paul heard her say this he turned and commanded the evil spirit to leave the girl. The spirit came out at the command of Paul, and after this the girl could no longer tell fortunes. When her masters saw that all hope of their gains was gone they were very angry at Paul and Silas, and they seized them and dragged them to the magistrates, saying that these men were making great disturbance in the city. The magistrates commanded that Paul and Silas should be scourged, and when this cruel punishment was over they were dragged to prison. There the jailer



put them in the inner prison and made their feet fast in the stocks, for he had been commanded to keep them safely. Though Paul and Silas were suffering greatly from the dreadful scourging they had received, they made no complaint: they only prayed to God and comforted one another as best they could.

That night, at midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing praises to God, so that all the other prisoners heard them, when suddenly there was a great earthquake that shook the prison and opened all the doors and loosened the chains of the prisoners. The jailer waked in terror and would have killed himself, for he thought that the prisoners must have all escaped; but Paul cried with a loud voice that he must do himself no harm, for all the prisoners were there.

Then the jailer called for a light, and came trembling and fell on his knees before Paul and Silas, saying, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house." And they taught him about Jesus and how he had come to save the world, and the jailer believed and was baptized, and all his family. And he brought Paul and Silas into his own rooms and washed their wounds and gave them food; and he and all his family rejoiced for the truth that they had learned about Jesus Christ.

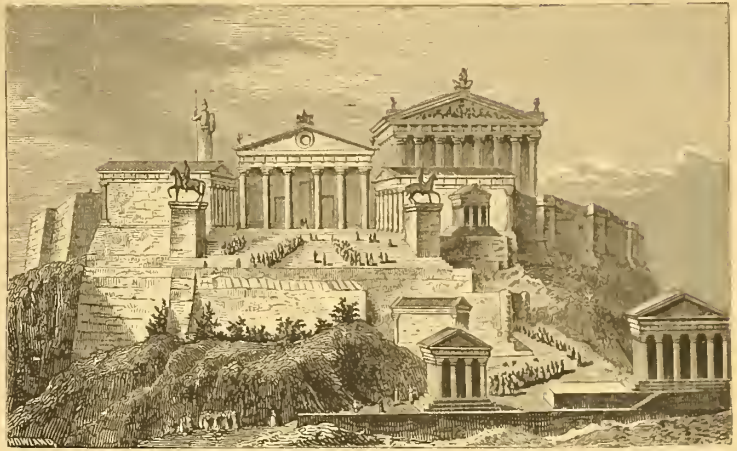
When morning came the magistrates sent to the jailer saying, "Let those men go," for they were frightened because of the earthquake. But Paul knew that this was the proper time to stand up for the rights which were his, and he said, "They have beaten us openly and uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they wish to send us out privately, and as it were in secret? No, let them come and fetch us out publicly."

When the messengers brought this word to the magistrates they were afraid, because it was against the law to beat any man who was a Roman citizen. Paul inherited this honor from his father, though we do not know how the father came to have it, being a Jew; it was probably for some service he had rendered to some Roman high in authority. However this may be, when the magistrates heard of Paul's citizenship they came humbly to Paul and begged his pardon, and asked him if he and Silas would not kindly leave the city. So Paul and Silas went to the house of Lydia, and when they had seen all the new converts, and comforted them, they went away.

They travelled through various Grecian cities preaching the gospel, the people



hearing them gladly, but the Jews always making trouble and setting people against them, although they could not prevent many from believing. At last Paul came to Athens. This city was full of beautiful temples and altars to heathen gods. The people of Athens were gay and pleasure-loving, but they were also very intelligent and fond of every-



thing beautiful, and interested in new thoughts, and their learned men took pleasure in arguing and disputing with Paul. And at last they took Paul to their highest court, which was held in a fine building on the top of a hill that overlooks the city, and they asked him to explain to them the meaning of his new doctrine.

Then Paul preached to them about the true God, and about his son Jesus, who had been raised from the dead. But they did not care about his teachings, and Paul soon

found that, intelligent as the Athenians were, they were not yet ready to receive the gospel, and that it would be a waste of time for him to remain and preach to them.

So he went on to Corinth, which was not far from Athens. And there he found a certain Jew named Aquila, and his wife Priscilla, lately come from Rome, because the emperor had given orders that all Jews should depart from Rome. Aquila and Priscilla believed in Jesus when they heard Paul preach about him, and Paul went home and lived and worked with them, for they were tent-makers, and that was also the trade that Paul had learned when he was a boy.



All the Jews of that time, however rich they might be, or however learned they wished their sons to become, caused each one of them to be taught a trade. Tent-making was a very common industry in the country round about Tarsus, where Paul was born, and it was most natural that he should learn this trade, though he probably had no idea that he should

ever practise it. But when Paul took up the life of service of God, and devoted himself to preaching about Christ, he did not think best to be always a charge upon those who heard him, and so he took up tent-making and supported himself by that.

The people of Corinth were very different from the people of Athens. Many were ready and willing to hear the gospel and to accept Christ. It was while Paul was living in Corinth that he wrote the two epistles to the Thessalonians. On his way between Philippi and Athens he had visited them and had formed a little church there.

At the end of a year and a half Paul left Corinth and sailed for Palestine, and Aquila and Priscilla went with him as far as Ephesus, a city of Asia Minor. Paul stopped over at Ephesus too, and preached the gospel there, and the people would have been glad to keep him, but he was very anxious to go up to Jerusalem to an approaching feast, and so he sailed away, promising to come back some other time.

While he was gone a certain Jew named Apollos came to Ephesus. He was a very learned man, and knew the Scriptures wonderfully well, and he had heard of



John the Baptist and had believed the things he said, and had taught them to others, but he knew nothing about Christ, except what John Baptist had taught. When Aquila and Priscilla found this to be so, they took him home with them and explained the gospel to him more perfectly; and he believed and went about preaching, and convincing the Jews that Jesus was indeed the Messiah.

Paul made his visit to Jerusalem, and then he set out on a third missionary journey, going through Asia Minor, founding new churches and strengthening old ones. Then he came to Ephesus as he had promised, and there he lived for three years, for many people of Ephesus heard the word gladly, and a very strong church was formed there. The people of Ephesus were believers in magic and practised it a great deal; but when they heard Paul preach and saw the miracles which the Lord wrought by him, they



gave up their belief in magic, and they came together and burned all the books which taught magical arts. There were a great many of them, and when their value was counted up it was found to be fifty thousand pieces of silver.

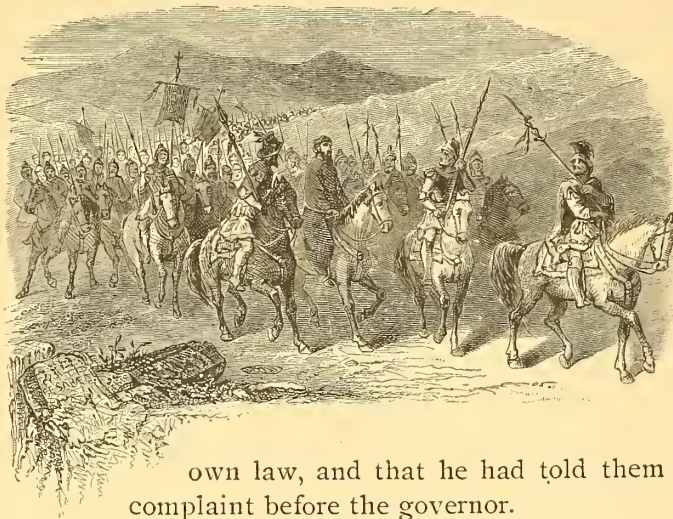
The Ephesians, like all the Gentiles of that time, had been idolaters, and worshipped many gods, and their city was filled with images of these gods, especially of their chief goddess, Diana. A great many men made their living by making these images, and when these men found that they were likely to lose their gains by the turning of the Ephesians to the true God, they stirred up the people so that the whole city was filled with riot and confusion. In the uproar they would probably have killed Paul if his friends would have permitted him to go out: but finally, after the crowd

had been shouting, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" for about two hours, the town-clerk succeeded in quieting them. When the uproar was over Paul thought it better to go away for a time, and he visited the Grecian churches and afterwards set out for Jerusalem.

The Christians of Jerusalem were very poor, for they were kept under by the scribes and rulers, and Paul had collected money for them from the Gentile Christians, many of whom were rich. He wished now to take this money to Jerusalem, but his Christian friends did not wish him to do so, for they knew that the Jews were very bitter against him, and they feared that harm would come to him; but he felt it to be his duty, and nothing could keep him back from that.

His words were very resolute, but very pathetic. "What mean ye," he said, "to weep and to break my heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." The brethren in the Holy City gave him a hearty welcome; and when he recounted to them the great things which God had wrought among the Gentiles in so many of the cities he had visited—the miracles he had witnessed, the converts he had welcomed, and the churches he had organized—they rejoiced and glorified God.

He had hardly been in Jerusalem a few days, however, when, as he was in the temple, the Jews stirred up a great uproar, and they seized Paul and would have killed



him if the chief captain of the Roman guard had not rescued him. And even then the Jews were so determined to kill him that the chief captain found it was not safe to keep him in Jerusalem, and he was forced to send him by night, under a strong escort of soldiers, to Cesarea, where Felix the governor was then living. He sent a letter to the governor telling him that the Jews accused this man of some crime about their

own law, and that he had told them to go to Cesarea and make their complaint before the governor.

Then after five days the high-priest and the elders came to Cesarea and accused Paul of being the ringleader of a sect who were making mischief. When they had made their complaint Paul spoke and defended himself, and Felix saw that he had done nothing wrong. But Felix had not the courage to say so and let Paul go free, for he wanted to be popular with the Jews. So he kept Paul a prisoner under guard, though not in a prison, letting him see his friends, and sometimes sending for him and talking with him. When Paul was brought before Felix he always preached to him



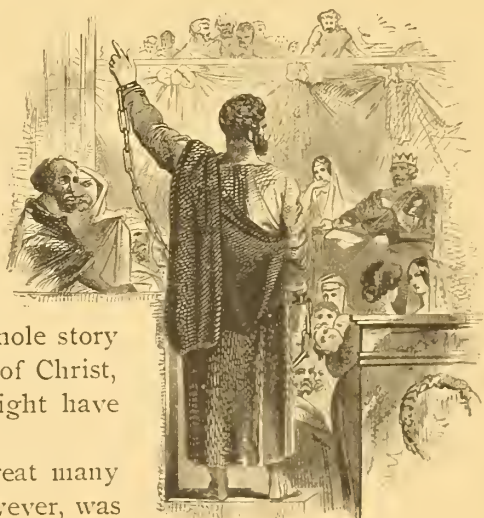
of his duty and of judgment to come, so that Felix trembled: but he did not try to do better; he only told Paul to go away for that time, and when it was more convenient for him to attend to what he said he would let him know. He hoped too that Paul would bribe him to let him go free, but Paul did not; and so when, after two years, another man, named Festus, was made governor in his place and Felix went away, he left Paul a prisoner.

Shortly after Festus became governor he went up to Jerusalem, and while there the high-priest came to him with a complaint against Paul. When therefore Festus had gone back to Cesarea he sent for Paul and asked him if he would like to go up to Jerusalem and stand a trial. But Paul knew that there would be no justice for him in Jerusalem; he told Festus that he had done no wrong to the Jews and that he appealed to Cæsar, the emperor. So Festus decided to send him to Rome to be tried before Cæsar.

A few days later the king, Herod Agrippa II., came with his wife Berenice to visit Festus: and to Agrippa Festus spoke about Paul, saying that he was about to send him to Rome, but that he really could not quite understand what the Jews accused him of, and he would like to have Agrippa hear the man and then give advice as to what Festus ought to write the emperor about him.

The next day, therefore, when Agrippa was seated on the throne, and Berenice beside him, Paul was brought before him and permitted to speak for himself. And he made so noble a defence of his conduct, telling the whole story of his conversion and of his labors in the cause of Christ, that Agrippa told Festus afterward that he might have been set free if he had not appealed to Cæsar.

So Paul was put on board ship, with a great many other prisoners, to be sent to Rome. Paul, however, was

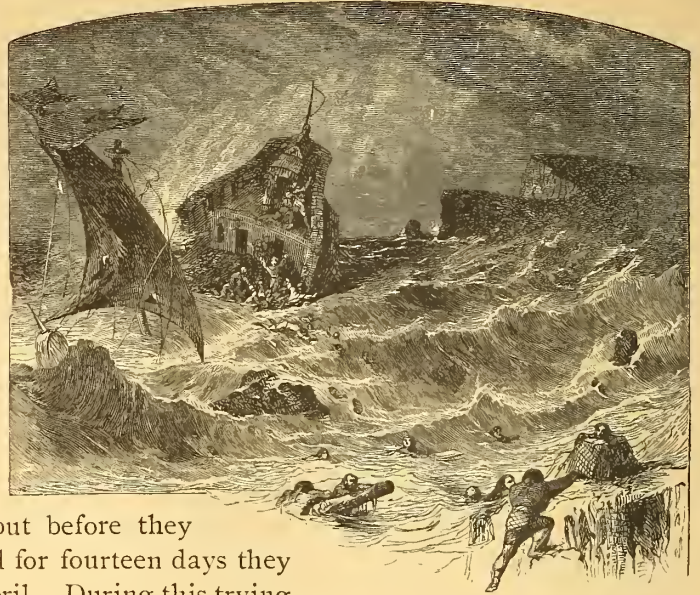


not treated as a common prisoner, and his friends were permitted to go with him. Among them was Luke, who wrote one of the Gospels and the book of the Acts.

The voyage was a long one. They made several stops, and at last the time of year drew on when travelling was dangerous by reason of the storms. The captain of the ship hoped however to get to a certain harbor, where they might stay comfortably until the stormy season was over; but before they reached it a great wind arose, and for fourteen days they were driven before it in hourly peril. During this trying time Paul kept up the courage of the captain and crew, often giving good advice as to what should be done, and telling them that an angel of God had appeared to him and told him that none of the lives on the ship should be lost. At last, however, the ship struck and went to pieces, but it was near the land and all the people were saved. When they got to land they found that they were on an island named Melita, now called Malta. The people of the island were very kind, and kindled a great fire on the shore to warm and comfort the drenched and shivering people. Paul helped to gather sticks, and as he placed them on the fire a viper, or poisonous snake, came out of the heat and fastened on his hand. The superstitious people took this for a sign that he was a murderer or other guilty person; but when Paul shook off the viper and no harm came to him, they changed their minds and thought he was a god.

While Paul was on the island he performed several miracles, healing people of various diseases.

After three months they embarked in a ship that had



been spending the winter in that harbor, and after several stops they reached Puteoli, in Italy. There they found some Christian brethren, which must have greatly cheered Paul's heart after his long wanderings. Paul was permitted to stay a week with these Christian friends, and then he and his party went on by land towards Rome.

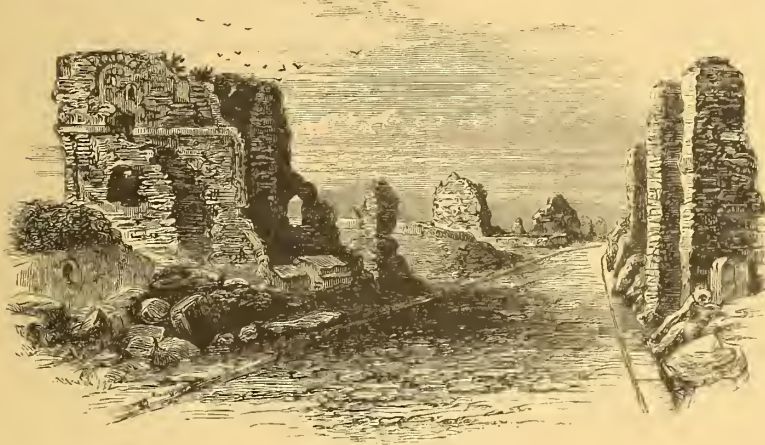
There were a great many Christians in Rome by this time. Paul had never been in Rome, but he had seen many of them in other places, and many of them were his own converts. He had written a long letter to them while he was in Corinth, that Epistle to the Romans which is in the New Testament. When these Christians heard that Paul was on his way to Rome a number of them went out to meet him, going by the

Appian Way, a famous road leading south from Rome, which now is lined with ruins, but then was bordered by stately buildings. They met Paul and his friends at Appii Forum, about twenty-seven miles from Rome, and it gladdened Paul's heart greatly when he saw them, so that he thanked God and took courage.

When they arrived in Rome Paul was put in charge of a soldier, to

whom he was constantly chained by the arm day and night. He was allowed however to live in a house of his own, and not in a prison, and his Christian brethren were permitted to come to him as much as they chose. As soon as Paul was settled in his house he sent for the Jews who were living in Rome and explained his case to them; but they seemed not to care much about it, and after faithfully declaring the gospel to them, Paul turned his attention to the Gentiles.

Paul lived for two years thus, and at the end of that time he was probably set free. But if so, he was afterward arrested again and kept in prison and treated with more severity than before, and at last he was condemned to death. He was not afraid to die. His life had been one of many sorrows, of heavy trials, of such dangers as few men have known, and release must have been welcome. How wonderful the record is, as he himself so pathetically writes in a letter to Christians at Corinth. "Of the Jews," he says, "five times received I forty stripes save one; thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, . . . in weariness and painfulness; in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."



Did all these labors and trials make Paul unhappy? You might think so, but they did not. "As sorrowful," he writes in the same letter, "yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." Faith in Christ and love to him can do wonders: they enabled Paul not to care for any trial or toil, and even to glory in them for Christ's sake.



He was very willing to live so long as God saw best, for the good of Christ's cause in the world; but he felt that to depart and be with Christ was far better than any earthly pleasure. "I am now ready to be offered," he wrote to Timothy shortly before he was led out beyond the walls of Rome to lay his head upon the block. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day."

THE REVELATION.

THE "beloved disciple," John, after his Master's death, preached the gospel in many places, and at last, in his old age, he was arrested and banished to the island of Patmos for trying to bring people to Christ. While he was there he had a very wonderful vision of his Lord. It was on a Sunday morning, and he was "in the Spirit," as he writes, when he heard a sound behind him as of a trumpet, and turning he saw Jesus, not as the man of sorrows he had been on earth, but all glorious and radiant, like nothing that man has ever seen before or since. Jesus gave him many messages to write to the churches, reproving them for their sins and encouraging them when they had done right, and promising glorious blessings to "him that overcometh."



After that John had many other visions, or revelations, of what should be in future days. The old prophets had spoken of a time when all should know the Lord, and this world should be so full of peace and quietness that fierce beasts should lie down together with gentle lambs and

should not harm them, and a little child should lead them. And now John saw a vision of a new heaven and a new earth, where God would dwell with men, and there would be no more death nor sorrow nor crying, for the former things would have passed away. That blessed vision will become a reality when all the world has come to the knowledge of Christ and taken Jesus for its Lord. Even so come, Lord Jesus.





The "disciple whom Jesus loved," and who leaned on his breast at the last supper, also was permitted to add to his disclosure of the future glories of the church on earth most enrapturing glimpses of heaven itself. And so we have followed the Bible story from Eden to Paradise—that blessed abode where none can enter but those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. How tender and strong and everlasting the love between him and his Lord! Let us love him as John did, and we too shall dwell with him in heaven.





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